

Art Review:

Issue 47 £5.00

'I was never so interested in the body; I was more interested in the psychic and philosophical way a person is situated in the world'

January &
February 2011

Anthony
McCall:
Let there
be light

Moebius:
The king
of comics

Daniel
Sinsel:
A return to
innocence

Charles
Baudelaire:
On drugs

Nigel
Cooke:
On what makes
us prefer
comedy art to
its 'serious'
counterpart

ERWIN WURM



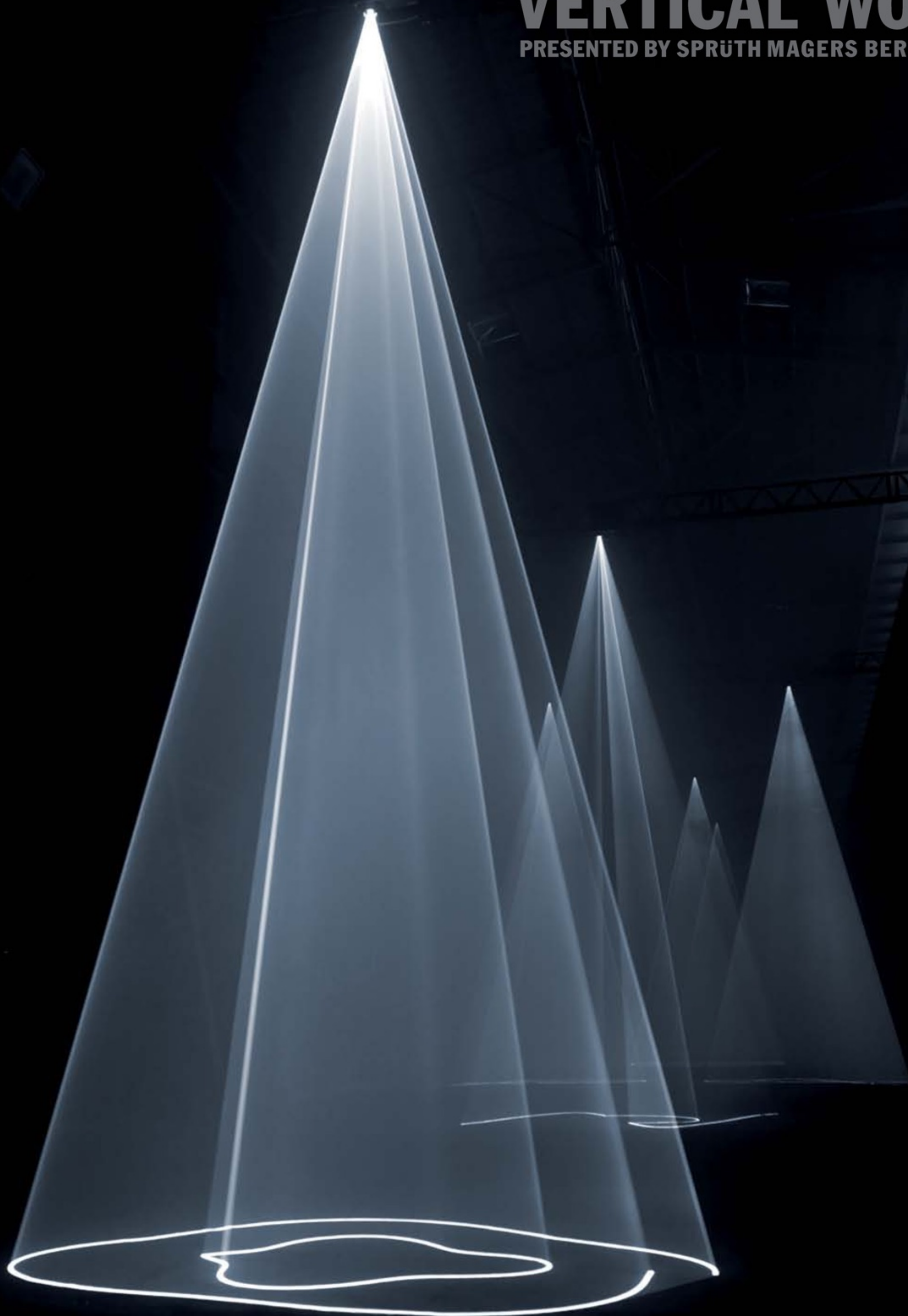
Welcome to the brighter side of life



ANTHONY MCCALL

VERTICAL WORKS

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ANTHONY MCCALL. INSTALLATION VIEW AT HANGAR BICOCCA, MILAN (2009). PHOTO: GIULIO BUONO

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YES BIOLOGICAL

11 JANUARY – 12 FEBRUARY 2011



ERWIN WURM BIG SUIT, 2010
ALUMINIUM, PAINT, 300 x 130 x 73 CM
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photographed by JAAP SCHEEREN

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International art, design and architecture news, updated every day, as it happens

First View

Oliver Basciano takes a walk with Hamish Fulton in Boulogne-sur-Mer, David Ulrichs sends a postcard from the latest Berlin openings, including Carsten Höller at Hamburger Bahnhof, and Chris Bors reports from the 'ironic', star-studded Rob Pruitt Art Awards at the Guggenheim.

A thick, yellow, flexible cable is tangled in a complex, abstract shape on a white, slightly textured surface. The cable has some faint, illegible markings on it.

TONY FEHER

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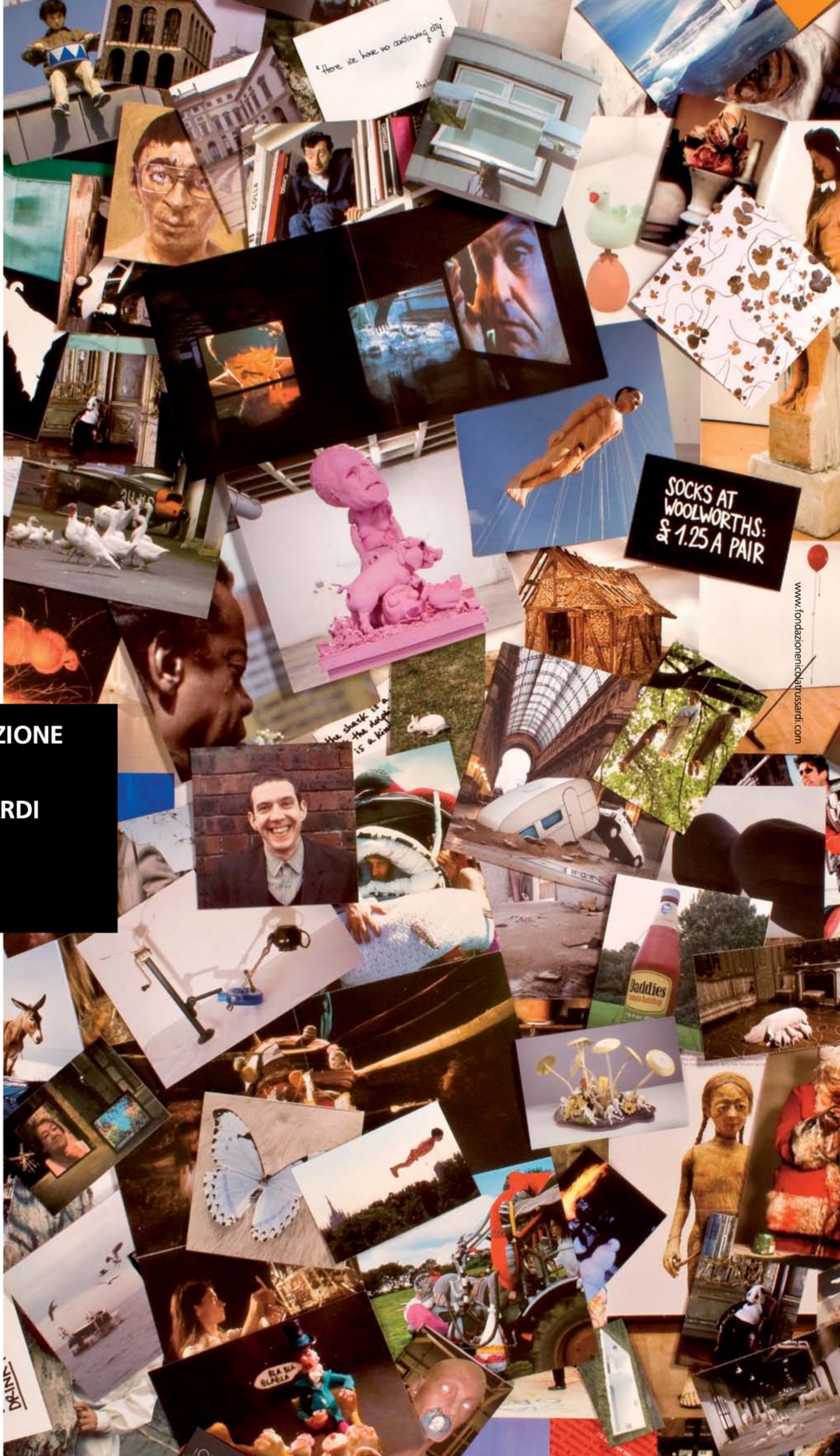
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Art Review:

A man and a woman are standing together in a formal setting. The woman, on the left, has long brown hair and is wearing a dark blue, long-sleeved, V-neck dress. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. The man, on the right, has short brown hair and is wearing a dark navy blue suit with a white shirt and a dark red tie. He is also smiling and looking towards the camera. They are standing in front of a large, ornate gold frame containing a painting. The painting depicts a person's legs and feet in a dynamic pose. The background wall is white with intricate carvings. A gold-colored decorative urn is visible on the right side of the image.

JENNIFER RUBELL

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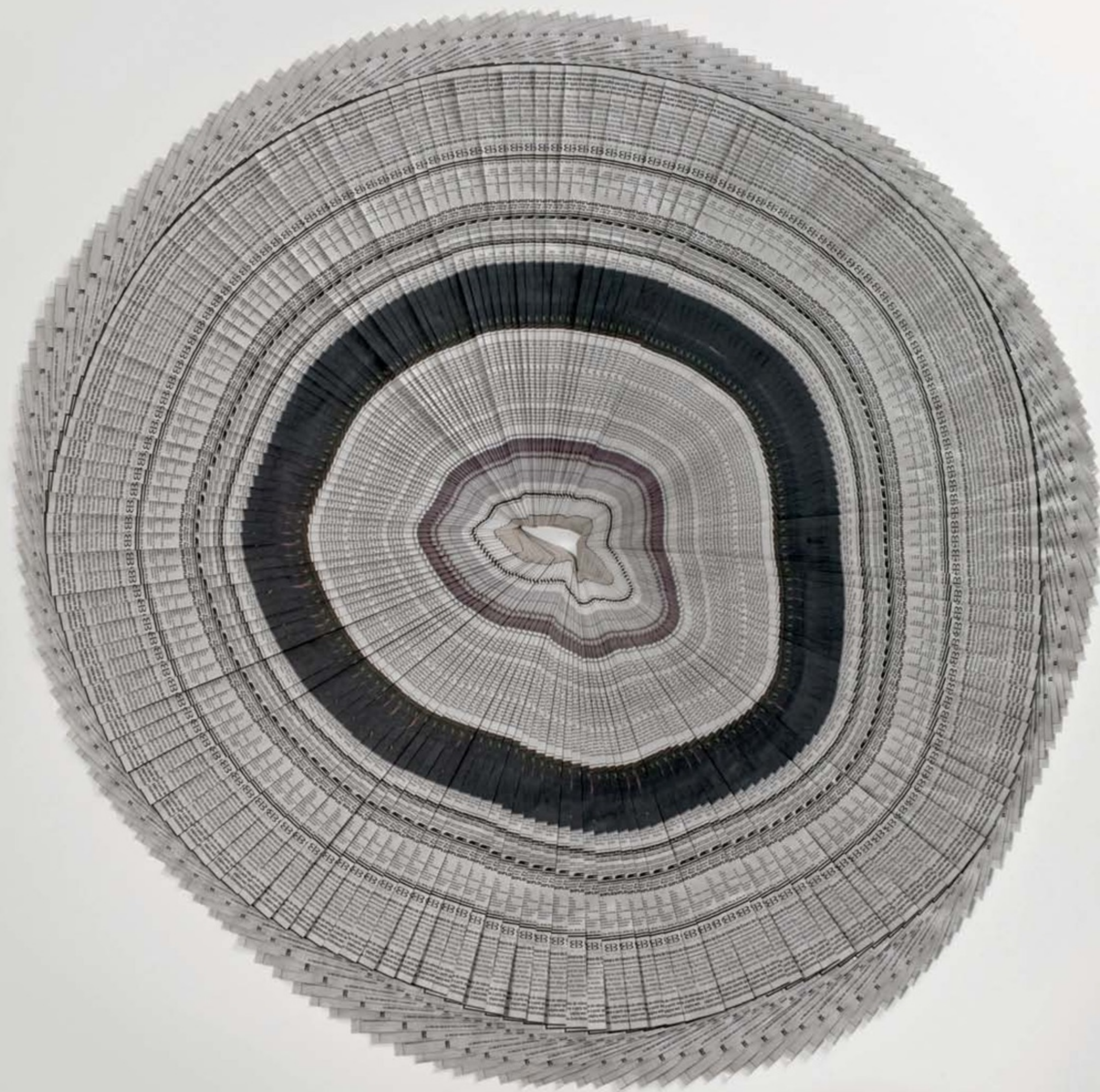
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Art Review:



Miler Lagos

Tree Rings Dating, 2010. Newspaper, collage. 154 x 154 cm.

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JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2011

TYLER COBURN

An artist and writer based in Los Angeles, Tyler Coburn studied Comparative Literature at Yale University and is currently an MFA candidate at the University of Southern California. He has recently exhibited and performed at the Whitney Museum of American Art and SculptureCenter, both in New York; and at Tanya Leighton, Berlin, and FormContent, London.

JAAP SCHEEREN

Jaap Scheeren is a photographer who lives and works in Amsterdam. His practice investigates the narrow links between reality and reliability in photography, often with a focus on the strange relationship between beautiful environments and their inhabitants. His two most recent publications are *3 Roses, 9 Ravens, 12 Months*, a fairytale story shot in Slovakia, and *Fake Flowers in Full Colour* (both 2009), in which he and Hans Gremmen examine the possibility of creating three-dimensional images with colour separations.

LAURA MCLEAN-FERRIS

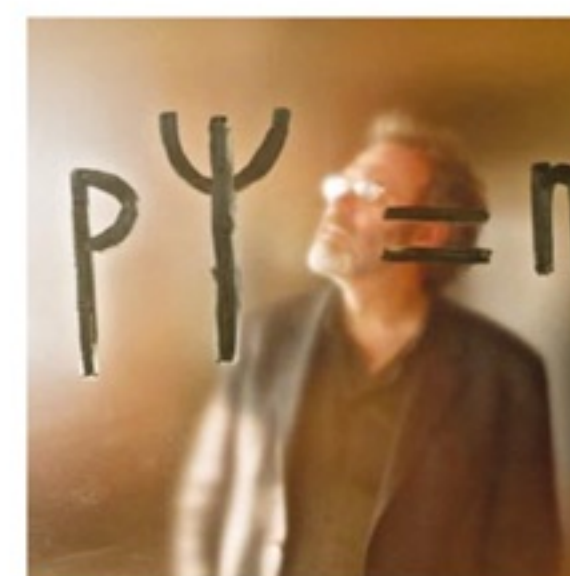
ArtReview editor at large Laura McLean-Ferris went to Iceland last year for the Villa Reykjavík project, and found herself on this 'Viking' boat in search of puffins. In addition to her work for ArtReview, which has recently included covering art in a lot of cold countries, she is an art critic for the *Independent* and a regular contributor to *Art Monthly*. She is currently cocurating a series of performance events in London for later this year.

MATTHEW COLLINGS

The man who takes responsibility for Jeff Koons's and Damien Hirst's first appearances on British television, Matthew Collings is a writer, broadcaster and artist. He edited the contemporary art magazine *Artscribe* in the 1980s, was the art critic on BBC Two's *The Late Show* until 1995 and is the author of many books on art, including *This Is Modern Art* (1999) and *Blimey!* (1997). His TV series *This Is Modern Art* (1999), which he wrote and presented for Channel 4, won several awards, including a BAFTA. His latest TV series, *Renaissance Revolution*, was shown on BBC Two in the autumn of 2010.

ASTRID MANIA

Astrid Mania holds a PhD in art history and is a freelance writer, translator and curator living in Berlin. From 2008 to 2010 she was an editor for *artnet* magazine. In 2004-5 she was guest curator on the Curating Contemporary Art course at the Royal College of Art, London. She has regularly contributed to various international art magazines, catalogues and related media. And yes, that's her real name.



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JANUARY & FEBRUARY

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'The image is of a piece of hair tied in a knot by a spider, suspended by its web, hanging in the basin of a rarely used bathtub. I watched the strand for a couple of weeks, always thinking I should photograph it. I finally got around to making the picture, and two days later, my friend came to town for a visit, took a shower and washed the hair away.'

snapshot DRU DONOVAN

NOW SEE THIS

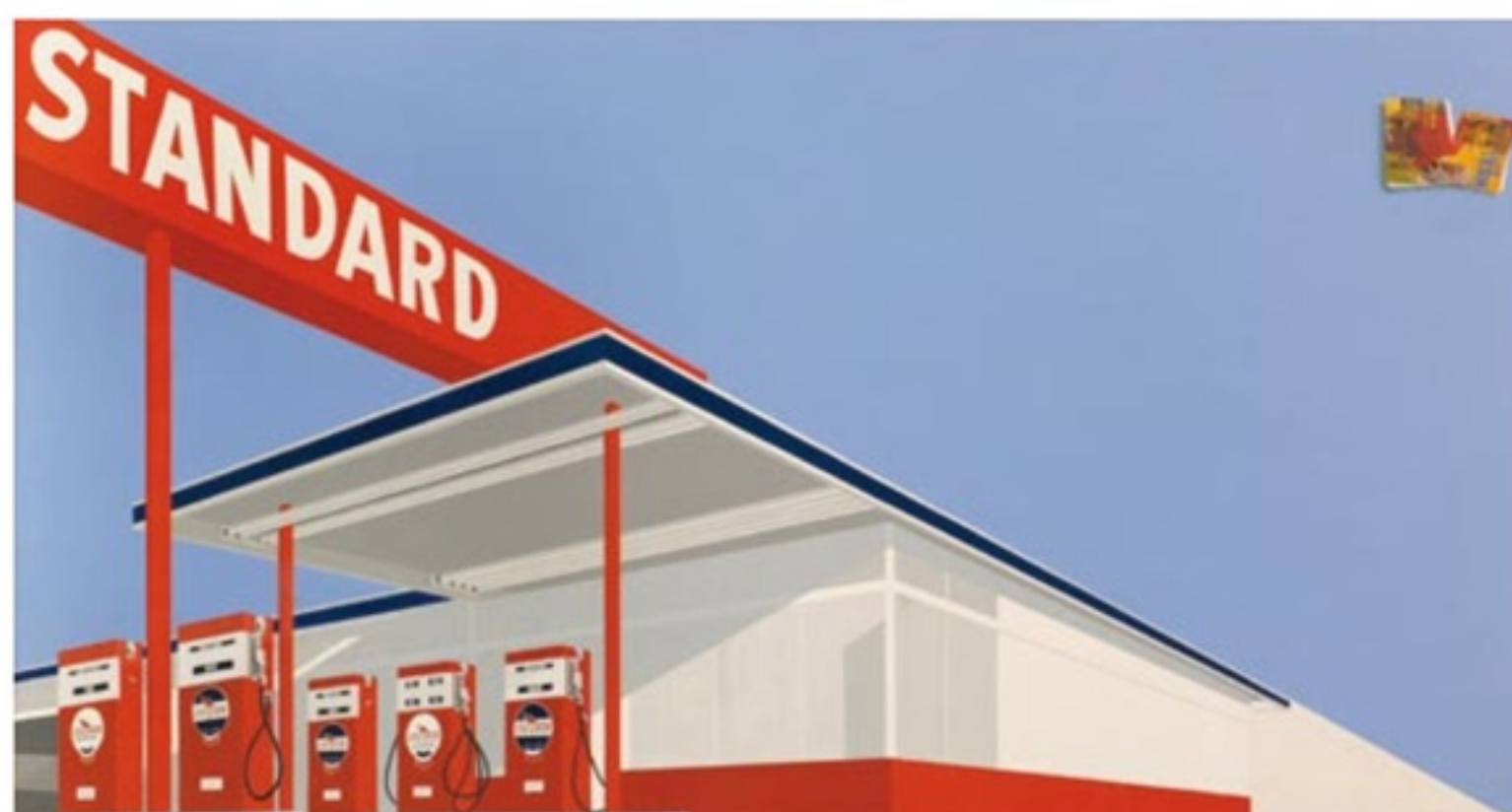
words *MARTIN HERBERT*

Discerning readers say 'about time': a European retrospective for **Len Lye** (*Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, to 13 February, www.ikon-gallery.co.uk*). The hand-painted films and twirling metal kinetic sculptures (or 'Tangibles') made by the New Zealander, who died in 1980, might have been too various, avantist and optimistic to make him a culture hero in his



lifetime: moving to Britain in 1926, he made films for the General Post Office and Ministry of Information, including one showcasing a wartime recipe for vegetable pie. But Lye's jitterbugging, warm-toned experimental films from the 1930s and 50s in particular have been guesting in biennials and covertly influencing ambitious young artists for the past half-decade or so. At Ikon, films from 1935's *A Colour Box* onward, plus sculpture, drawings and paintings, promise an exalting working demo of his admirably unabashed personal philosophy: 'Individual Happiness Now'.

A survey of work by **Ed Ruscha** (*Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, 23 January – 17 April, www.mamfw.org*) might seem less noteworthy: the gimlet-eyed pasha of Pop-conceptualism has gained plaudits aplenty over



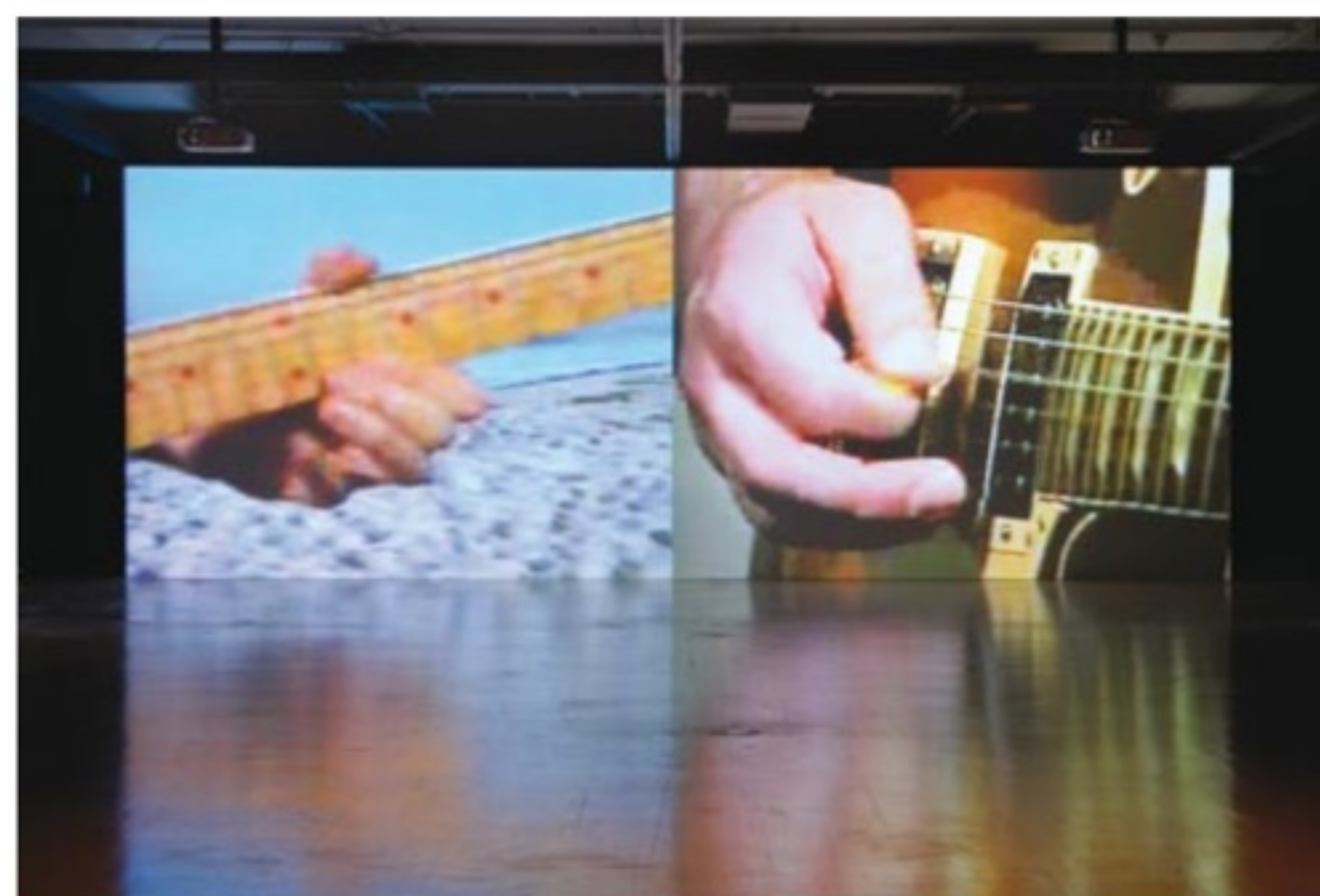
the decades. But the 75 works in *Road Tested* are pleasingly corralled under the sign of Ruscha's all-American love of car culture, which dates at least to the 1956 cross-country trip that turned him from an Okie into an Angeleno. Among the highlights, alongside paintings and photos of gasoline stations and Hollywood signs, books of parking lots and, hopefully, 1967's uncharacteristically forceful, typewriter-trashing *Royal Road Test*, is the rarely shown film *Miracle* (1975), with its deadpan transfiguration of a mechanic. This, clearly, is the show you put on in big-oil country.

Devotees of wry restraint who can't travel to Texas, meanwhile, might console themselves with new work by **Ceal Floyer** (*Lisson Gallery, London, to 29 January, www.lissongallery.com*). Floyer's rep seems bound by an economics of scale: her work's deceptive slightness has somehow inflected her profile. This does a disservice to the Zen clarity and seamless loops of her thinking,



whether expressed via a slide of a bonsai tree enlarged to full size or, playing here in a spartan room, a series of songs edited into silence except where their lyrics mention the word 'things' (*Things*, 2009). I'd be as surprised to see Floyer run out of ideas as I would be if she started making monumental bronzes of Big Macs.

It may be unsurprising that the same gallery also represents another dedicated editor, **Cory Arcangel** (*Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, to 1 May, www.hamburgerbahnhof.de*), though weirder that



clockwise from top left: Len Lye, *Rainbow Dance*, 1936, 35mm Gasparcolor (digital transfer), sound, 5 min, courtesy British Post Office, Len Lye Foundation and British Film Institute, London; Ceal Floyer, *Things*, 2009, CDs, CD player, speakers, cables, wood, courtesy the artist and Lisson Gallery, London; Cory Arcangel, *A Couple Thousand Short Films about Glenn Gould*, 2007 (installation view, Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art, Sunderland, 2007), © the artist, courtesy the artist and Team Gallery, New York; Ed Ruscha, *Standard Station*, Amarillo, Texas, 1963, oil on canvas, 165 x 315 cm, collection Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover

Paris

Sophie Calle is having a show on the occasion of her mother's death: after seeing it, one feels both moved and amused. 'My mother liked to be talked about. Her life didn't appear in my work. That annoyed her. When I set up my camera at the end of her deathbed, because I was afraid she'd die when I wasn't there [...], she exclaimed: "At last!"'

'I'm already bored' reads the epitaph on the tomb of Calle's mother, Rachel-Monique, who liked to invent first names for herself and be photographed in front of gravestones with 'Mother' written on them, and who died listening to Mozart. Her last words were 'no worries'. At the Palais de Tokyo, her daughter takes them literally, inscribing the word *souci* ('worry') all over the exhibition, amid funny-looking tombstones and a homage in the form of a stuffed giraffe. These evocations follow Calle's particular form of logic, which lies between intimacy and unveiling, modesty and exploitation of detail, over the immense 9,000 square metres of the institution's lower level. This superb empty space of dust and concrete, awaiting renovation in spring, is well suited to being transformed into a mausoleum. A graveyardlike flowerpot has been placed just under a leak from the ceiling. "There were no more marigolds (also *souci* in French), so I chose dahlias", the artist explained to me.

There are indeed limits to Calle's historical reconstitutions, and her obsessions are playful. When factual constraints start to bug her, she adapts or she passes. Which is what happened with her trip to Lourdes. Sent there by a telepath, playing with the desire for a miracle, she came across a hotel bearing her mother's real name, Monique. But nothing much else, contrary to the fabulous coincidences her work usually seems to develop. This disappointment, recounted in faint engravings on thin porcelain slates, speaks of a game that has been lost to death. Death isn't the ultimate sign that will give meaning to life, or set life (like a concrete block). It remains inaccessible, like her mother's last breath. The video failed to capture it. The mother looks asleep, or already on the other side, projected as if in a Bill Viola diptych video next to images of the North Pole – the place her mother dreamed of visiting, but never did.

'If I have to disappear one day, I'll leave my shadow to look after you': her mother's handwritten Post-it, on a photo of her shadow, says everything about her sympathetic lack of enthusiasm about dying. The 'if' – the uncertain hypothesis of her disappearance – has become certainty, but in her absence; her death will be without her, thank you very much.

words *MARIE DARRIEUSSECQ*
translated from the French by *EMMELENE LANDON*

both have worked with Bach's *Goldberg Variations* (1741): Floyer by playing simultaneously all the versions she could find (variations on variations) and Arcangel in his career-defining *A Couple Thousand Short Films about Glenn Gould* (2007), a two-screen video, included in this survey of his technophile yet obsolescence-obsessed art, that uses a self-designed computer program to remake sections of the classical piano *Variations* using clips of single notes culled from 1,100 versions on YouTube. So, artists, want to show with Lisson? Watch your Bach.

This just in: entries are now closed for 'Best Exhibition Title for a Solo Show in China'. The Golden Chopstick goes to *I Miss Socialism, Maybe...* by

Nedko Solakov (*Galleria Continua, Beijing, to 30 January, www.galleriacontinua.com*).

The fifty-something's upbringing in communist Bulgaria is a residual presence in his art, which is broadly but metaphorically concerned with mechanisms of control: having one volunteer attempt to paint a gallery black while another steadily whitewashes it, for example. Here, in paintings, drawings, videos,



sculpture and installation, Solakov adopts a ubiquitous Big Brother-style motif of a scrutinising gaze: perhaps most overtly in a pair of eyes looming out of a wall of red, which gaze proprietorially over seating shaped like Chinese characters.

Geoffrey Farmer (*Casey Kaplan, New York, 10 February – 19 March, www.caseykaplangallery.com*)

tends to start with something epic and then, improbably, make it bigger. The Vancouver-based slow-burner previously worked up an installation, collaged over the course of the show's run from images in a musty *Reader's Digest* encyclopaedia covering 'the last two million years'; elsewhere he's exhibited a kit for transforming oneself into the Hunchback of Notre Dame and, in the recent *Every Letter in the Alphabet* (2010), dedicated a year to commissioning, gathering and producing a wide range of texts for distribution

New York

This autumn was good for the art market. Ongoing weakness in the US economy, plus quantitative easing, made money cheap and the dollar cheaper. The Republican electoral triumph in the midterms, abetted by the Tea Party's call for limited government, offered the prospects of continuing low taxes and lax regulation. With cash abundant, the dollar wilting – if not also suspect as a store of value – and the likelihood of the type of governance prevailing that has allowed the rich to get the richer and the poor to get shafted, the rich are buying assets. And over the last decades, art has proved to be a prime investment vehicle: that is to say, another unregulated market in which values can be manipulated.

There is an irony in the rise of so-called Tea Party populism spawning upper-class consumption: but please remember that much of the lip service paid to the ideals of 'the Founders' and to innumerable fictions of upward mobility, tax cuts and balanced budgets this campaign season was funded by well-heeled titans who reap the benefits of our underregulated markets. Not many voters seemed to know this, or to care. Surface trumps substance; platitudes of American exceptionalism trump meaningful policies that aim to build a broadly prosperous economy. Meanwhile, those who pay call the shots.

This dynamic tracks through our cultural sphere as well. Many of the same big donors to rightwing causes, and several liberal-minded plutocrats as well, happen to support our arts institutions. And they expect to have their way. How else to explain the flurry of private museums and spaces through which patrons in essence compete with our public institutions on the same tax-free footing?

Further, what are John Currin's most recent pastiches of Bougureau, that epitome of nineteenth-century bourgeois taste, in which upper-crust ladies engage in soft-core lesbian play, if not the triumph of surface over substance? We won't have same-sex marriage, but same-sex dalliance at a WASPY tea party titillates as a straight male fantasy. What are Dan Colen's supersize versions of Jackson Pollocks rendered in expectorated chewing gum other than slick, money-driven takedowns of high culture which pretend, by virtue of their 'abject' aesthetic and disgorged medium, to be of the common man? Isn't it cute that his first show at Gagosian, of altered thrift-store paintings, was held in the toilet? It sold out. Thing is, while most Americans can still afford to chew gum, they couldn't get near Gagosian's loo. Then again, scared shitless about their prospects in this economy, they are busy buying into equally vapid fantasies of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

words **JOSHUA MACK**



around his home city. In Farmer's hands, the epic models we create of the world at once spin towards irrelevance and – through his and our modulations – turn the exhibition format into a space to rehearse an endless refusal of finality.

It's been a long road home for **Kutlug Ataman** (*Istanbul Modern*, to 6 March, www.istanbulmodern.org), only now receiving his first major show in Turkey despite being the country's best-known artist. But then Ataman's story is hardly a typical one: having been



tortured by Turkey's military junta in his teens (he's currently preparing to sue the perpetrators), he became first a successful cineaste and then, in the mid-1990s, a lauded creator of loquacious multiscreen video installations exploring the construction and artifices of identity. Among the 11 works here is a new one, *Beggars* (2010), filmed in the host city and mixing actors and the genuinely indigent: as pan-European austerity measures bite, it could hardly be timelier.

from top: Geoffrey Farmer, *You Will Not Know About Me*, 2010, mixed media, dimensions variable, unique (installation view, Huckleberry Finn, 2010, CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Art, San Francisco, photo: Johnna Arnold, courtesy the artist and Casey Kaplan, New York; Kutlug Ataman, *99 Names*, 2002, produced by the Institute for the Readjustment of Clocks, Istanbul, courtesy the artist and Thomas Dane Gallery, London

Berlin

Berlin owes its reputation as a leading art metropolis primarily to a sequence of events that unfolded in the mid-1990s. It was then, in the no-longer-divided city, that galleries such as Neugerriemschneider, CFA, Klosterfelde and Galerie Neu were founded, alongside institutions like the KW and Hamburger Bahnhof. Then, too, a whole new generation of artists with bases in Berlin – Olafur Eliasson, John Bock, Manfred Pernice, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Christian Jankowski and Daniel Richter – embarked on their meteoric careers. One member of that ‘brotherhood’, Carsten Höller, currently has a solo show, *Soma*, at Hamburger Bahnhof. The large, clean, carefully designed setting is occupied by 12 reindeer, 24 canaries and 8 mice, all supposedly consuming soma – that legendary, immortalising mead. Viewers are invited to discover how this ‘drug’ alters the creatures’ behaviour. So far, so good – but anyone who has followed Höller’s work over the last 15 years will have long since become used to motifs and strategies involving observations of animal behaviour and altered states of consciousness, and will find this installation somewhat lacklustre. And although there may be mass appeal in the fact that this art – a critique of science by a trained scientist – offers an impeccable scaling-up of scientific procedures, it’s nonetheless boring.

The same problem was apparent a few months ago in Eliasson’s exhibition at Berlin’s Martin-Gropius-Bau. A well-tempered version of the vocabulary he had formulated in the mid-1990s was laid out for all to see, intelligently and respectfully addressing purely phenomenological issues – just don’t get political, like in the old days! There were mirrors, the light spectrum appeared as an aesthetic entity, visitors found themselves wandering through a mist-filled room... Yet there were no sidesteps or even progressions to be found in the exhibition (curated by no less a figure than Daniel Birnbaum).

The brilliant success these global players now enjoy has its downside: practically every door is open to them, but it seems they no longer have the time, the curiosity or the urge to seek out new paths. Instead they ‘spell out an aesthetic programme down to the very last detail’, as the critic Dominikus Müller wrote of Franz Ackermann’s exhibition *No Roof But the Sky* last summer at Neugerriemschneider.

As it happens, these three artists are not the only ones to indulge in a painstaking form of presentation that soon becomes little more than what Müller calls ‘a relentless mantra’. However, there was recently proof, presented by Tiravanija at Art Forum Berlin, that 1990s artists in midcareer can still startle us. Having long been labelled a ‘culinary artist’, Tiravanija took visitors aback with new sculptural works, including *Untitled 2010 (All the Days on the Autobahn)* (2010): his old car proudly presented in an orange-tinted rectangular glass box (not a scrap of food in sight, thank goodness), on display like an extinct, fossilised creature.

words **RAIMAR STANGE**
translated from the German by **FIONA ELLIOTT**

On the other hand, there’s always escapism.

Federico Herrero (*Galleri Bo Bjerggaard, Copenhagen, to 29 January, www.bjerggaard.com*) makes paintings that you can positively warm your hands in front of, deceptively childlike semiabstracts infused with the heat of the artist’s native Costa Rica. Herrero became an artist only because he didn’t become an architect and sees his paintings existing in an overlap between the two; accordingly, his vivacious canvases can resemble aerial views of



toy towns built from blocks of pure, colour, in which half the pleasure is extrapolating a reality from schematised shapes. Situationism is ostensibly another influence, maybe in the sense that this feels like a better, simpler world than the one we have. Indulge yourself.

Over in Spain, meanwhile, **ARCO** (*Madrid, 16–20 February, www.arco.ifema.es*) is celebrating its 30th birthday – albeit cautiously, since last year’s edition of the art fair was very definitely not one for the ages. (Except in the annals of conflict between galleries and the fair’s selection committee.) This year, not surprisingly, there’s a new director – the motivated and energetic Carlos Urroz, formerly a director of



Helga de Alvear gallery, who's evidently upgrading the emphasis on Latin America (with a focus section devoted to 14 artists from across the region), along with new strands for young European galleries and, perhaps rather slyly, a section for Russian art. Fingers crossed.

Finally, the lengthily touring *Studiowork*

retrospective by **Eva Hesse** (*Berkeley Art Museum, 26 January – 10 April, www.bampfa.berkeley.edu*), organised by

Edinburgh's Fruitmarket Gallery, reaches probably the most salient spot in its voyage. What everyone knows about the late German-born American artist's work is that, underscoring Hesse's status as a sculptural poet of ephemerality, some of her productions in latex, wax and cloth are tremendously fragile and can't travel. What everyone may not know is that a goodly number of them were bequeathed to the Berkeley Art Museum by Hesse's sister after the artist's death, in 1970. This, then, is a once-in-a-lifetime augmenting of a landmark show; and what other justification could there be for a winter break in California? (Cough.)



Miami

So here's what happens: we're in a poorly lit but open-all-night bar. Me, the artist and the woman on whom he's performing a Miami chat-up: no words, just hands. In one of those hands the artist cups a breast; in the other, a bottle of Patrón snared when the barman wasn't looking. He's groping, swigging and chatting to me and a couple of local collectors about his work. And my oversight in having not written an eight-page (minimum) feature on the last. In fact, I should have been doing that in every issue this magazine puts out. And I have to confess that after a mojito or several I am, slowly and absurdly, coming round to his way of thinking (that's what alcohol in Miami quantities will do to you). Perhaps he *is* a genius. How else could he be doing the drinking, the chatting and the chatting up all at the same time? Just when my admiration is reaching its zenith, and I'm beginning to sense that my mouth might involuntarily start muttering, "Yes, yes. We should make the entire next issue about you. That's a promise, blah, blah, *bleaurgh*..." the artist wobbles mid-swig-and-nipple-tweak and somersaults down a flight of stairs, ending up in an impressively crumpled heap. Amazingly, the bottle is intact, if no longer completely full. The artist gets up, wipes a stream of blood from his nose, takes another swig and slumps back to the floor. "What a great artist!" one of the hitherto silent collectors chirps with both sincerity and admiration. And like Saul on his way to Damascus, I feel enlightened. Even if the lighting in the bar is of a wattage that ensures I will never recognise this particular collector again. This is what a certain type of collector looks for when he buys a work of art: an avatar for a life he does not really live. "Look at that!" I imagine him saying at a cocktail evening thrown to impress his most intimate friends and a few of the junior office staff. And then pointing to one of the currently comatose (but breathing – we checked) artist's works hung magnificently above the living room sofa (and I can tell from his voice that this collector will by buying one post-haste). "Painted by a genuine alcoholic, womanising stoner. That's the kind of company I keep when I'm not entertaining you squares!" I bet there's one of those Philippe Starck gnome chairs somewhere nearby, to demonstrate the incredible sense of humour he hasn't got as well.

words **MARK RAPPOLT**

JACQUES VILLÉGLÉ

TRAJECTOIRE URBAINE



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GODS AND MONSTERS

What a 20-year-old photograph of half-dressed art dealers tells us about today's artworld

AN AFTERNOON IN THE STUDIO of the young Puerto Rican painter Angel Otero yielded a strange gift. Interrupting a preview of his February show at Lehmann Maupin Gallery, Otero legged it over to a laptop to brandish an image he said he'd uncovered on a ramble through the wilderness of what a sniggering George W. Bush once called 'the interwebs'. A jpeg of a black-and-white photograph, the image squeezed several morality tales into a space no larger than a place card. The minute I caught sight of it, I knew I'd be writing about it.

Taken in St Bart's in 1991 by Jean 'Johnny' Pigozzi – French car-fortune heir, contemporary art collector, amateur photographer and rabid starfucker – the image features the three most important art dealers of the last half-century in their skivvies and barefoot in what appears to be the living room of a lavish beach house. The only contemporary figures comparable with Olympians Lord Joseph Henry Duveen and Ambroise Vollard, these three picture-mongers have recast the pre-1950s role of the *marchand de tableaux* entirely in their likeness. 'Politicians are the same all over', Nikita Khrushchev once said. 'They promise to build a bridge even where there is no river.' These fellows, too, repeatedly struck art gold where none existed before and stretched miles of poured cement atop it.

Larry Gagosian, Charles Saatchi and the late Leo Castelli are to the artworld what Warren Buffett, George Soros and T.



Though they flagrantly share a broad Onassis-like image with P. Diddy and Jay-Z, these personages symbolise the sort of private deals that swap a few feet of canvas or bronze for the price of airliners. (The most expensive picture ever for a brief six days in 2006, Willem de Kooning's 1952–3 *Woman III*, was sold by Gagosian for \$137.5 million – a tad more than a fully kitted-out Boeing 787 Dreamliner.) While Gagosian, Saatchi and Castelli have always sought to raise the profile of art, the flipside of their success is that art has become a bona fide commodity, like gold, pork bellies or frozen orange juice. In an increasingly bifurcated artworld, it is not artists (except the lucky anointed few) who profit.

Castelli was, in the words of Robert Storr, a man 'with an exceptional gift for public relations' but 'no idea... no vision of his own'. Yet he successfully took various pages from the industrialist's handbook and franchised his artists out for shows in LA, Europe and Japan. Saatchi, a 'branded collector' in the market-ready lingo of *The \$12 Million Stuffed Shark* author Don Thompson, has – despite having an eye for several generations of mostly British talent – the singular distinction of being the first speculator to publicise his secondary-market activities as acts of patronage. Gagosian – this magazine's pick

words **CHRISTIAN VIVEROS-FAUNE**

Rowe Price have long been to the financial markets. Experts at picking art stocks in both the short and (as far as we know) long term, they have shaped an art-market colossus. The current drift of popular admiration proves one indicator of this trend. In our toadying, success-driven environment, Gagosian, Saatchi and Castelli (Castelli passed away in 1999, but his influence lingers like Roger & Gallet) are currently unalloyed art superstars. When we look at this picture (see the Jean Pigozzi pages on the Gagosian website), we think – far more than we do when considering grotty artists – of Mick, Keef and Gram Parsons lording it over the whole workaday, morally straight world at Villefranche-sur-Mer.

as 2010's most powerful man in the artworld – is the first art dealer to fully take on the guise of a top-flight investment adviser. Business innovators to a man, they represent the headlong monetisation of art – from Castelli's cozy relations with American institutions to Saatchi's and Gagosian's reinvention of the private museum as a sales platform.

It is the great paradox of our times that visual culture should be disappearing as the secondary art market is on a rocket to the moon. Recent news of shameless double-dealing at auctions – see Sarah Thornton's article (www.economist.com/node/17551930) on Philippe Ségalot's 'Carte Blanche' event at Phillips in New York last November – only strengthens the impression that in today's artworld money trumps all ideas generated by art and artists. Speculative wealth remains our polestar. This is the world ushered in by Leo, Charles and Larry.

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RIGHT HAND, MEET LEFT HAND

The response to arts funding cuts doesn't reveal much joined-up thinking in officialdom. But could it?

A MONTH INTO the Comprehensive Spending Review ordered by the UK's Jekyll-and-Hyde coalition government, and the arts-funding fur is flying. Hit with the threatened 30 percent cut in its government grant, Arts Council England (ACE) acted pretty much as this column predicted in November, slashing away at those bits of activity it knew it could easily do without, most significantly halving its £38 million grant to the arts-in-schools agency Creativity, Culture and Education. That, along with a 6.9 percent cut to the majority of funded organisations, was only the start of ACE's attempt to handle a shrinking of the funding it receives from the government, set to fall from £449m in 2010 to £349m by 2015.

This all looks pretty harsh, and the last couple of months have been filled with the wailing of the artworld's great and good: notably the Save the Arts campaign's high-profile media blitz featuring top brass such as Jeremy Deller, Mark Wallinger and Yinka Shonibare. But behind the posturing, a slightly different story is unfolding.

Take for example a key Tory cultural policy commitment to redistribute the millions generated by the National Lottery to the arts, sports and heritage. This is now set to be legislated by Parliament. Combined with the end of the temporary diversion of lottery money to the Olympics, ACE could see its



for Everyone' is all about networking, advocacy and collaboration, the first concrete policy change to be announced was the overhaul of the regularly funded organisation (RFO) system. On the pretext of having to cope with the cuts, ACE is forcing every RFO to reapply for its grant by January, while simultaneously lifting the minimum amount an organisation can apply for annually (from £20,000 to £40,000). Consequently, a raft of small organisations are set for the chop, unless they compete for more money. And ACE is already telling everyone that some organisations must 'inevitably' fall by the wayside. All in all, it's indicative of an organisation retreating into the world of larger, more bureaucratic and easy-to-relate-to institutions. And reinforcing its control over them by making funding agreements shorter and more precarious.

Such a mixed-up scenario suggests that some substantial reworking of the structure of arts funding is going to be needed

words **J.J. CHARLESWORTH**

lottery income increase by an estimated £80m in 2012. What the coalition is taking away with one hand, it's giving back with the other. Sort of. (This money can't be spent on ACE's 'core activities', given the principle of 'additionality' attached to it, but lottery funding already comprises a hefty chunk of ACE expenditure – £172m in 2010 – and is widely used to fund exhibitions and projects that constitute the programmes of our arts organisations.)

The voluble outcry against the cuts hides the manoeuvring and politicking currently taking place. ACE's major response to the cuts was to publish yet another strategy document: 'Achieving Great Art for Everyone'. It's full of the usual semidelusional rhetoric that people in officialdom like to bang out: how art can fix society's ills, make people healthier and less antisocial, drive economic growth. But while 'Great Art

soon. The government has made cuddly assurances that it doesn't want to abolish ACE, but the more substantial question is a cultural (and political) one: what kind of Arts Council is really wanted or needed? Norman Lebrecht, writing in the right-of-centre magazine *Standpoint* suggests that ACE should return to being a 'god of small beginnings', with large organisations funded directly by government. That sounds great, but in practice, such an approach would require an organisation that was closer to artists and small activities, rather than one which is retreating further behind a model that favours big-infrastructure organisations.

Both the government and ACE have lost sight of the fact that funding (or cutting it) is no substitute for having a cultural vision that trusts those who make culture, not those who administer it.



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WE'RE ALL RAVING MAD

Why do we prefer Tony Hancock's beetroot-coloured ducks to 'real' art?

MOST PEOPLE in the artworld have at some point found themselves discussing Ray Galton and Alan Simpson's 1960 movie *The Rebel*, directed by Robert Day and starring Tony Hancock as Anthony Hancock, an office worker trapped in the soulless daily grind of the suburban commuter. His secret passion is art; out of hours, beret on, he turns his flat into a studio in which a host of genre catastrophes take place, among them still-lives, portraits and stone carvings, much to the consternation of his landlady, Mrs Crevatte. In the face of derision, he flees to Paris seeking artistic credibility and the appreciation of like minds. Success comes quickly, but only as a result of a farcical mix-up in which the works of his talented studiomate, Paul Ashby, get taken for Hancock's, propelling the wrong artist to stardom and a life of luxury. As a bang-to-bust portrait of the absurdities of the lifestyle of the successful artist, the movie stands as one of the best-loved shibboleths of the art community – most artists I know can recite tracts of dialogue from the film verbatim, and have fond recollections of Hancock's fantastically wretched works.

The paintings for the film were executed by artist Alistair Grant in 1958, when he was a young printmaking tutor at London's Royal College of Art. Grant's brief was to produce



In contributing all three bodies of work, Grant staged a microsatire within the larger whole of the film's reactionary subtext, renegotiating outmoded notions of content and imagery – ducks, street scenes, portraits, etc – from the standpoint of Grant's modernist conception of abstract painting. While the film acknowledges abstraction as the (ridiculed) elite visual language of the time, the framing of Grant's 'real' works as the triumphs had the artist working against his own achievements when making the Hancock pieces. And by allowing his 'real' work to be used in a narrative about the foolishness of contemporary art, Grant pitted his work against these fictional dabblings. Polarised as two sides of one bad idea (art), the two styles adjacently staged the then-current debate on the progressive claims of painterly Modernism in the art-sceptical context of the film. And the results are ironically clear: there are not many people who remember the 'good' paintings at the end of the film over the 'bad' ones at the beginning. In an odd way, this represents the second farcical mix-up of the film – the gravitas of the Grant-Ashby show has been entirely supplanted by the sheer comic power of the crazy Hancock pictures,

words **NIGEL COOKE**

three distinct groups of paintings: Hancock's 'infantile' works, the dour figuration of (early) Ashby that catches the art critic's eye and finally Ashby's later, mature works made under the influence of Hancock's infantile style.

It's tempting to think of Grant's Hancock paintings as informed by the critical spirit of art brut or CoBrA artists – their shared faith in automatic painting, the art of children and the primacy of truth and rebellion, etc. Not so: the works were ignorantly commissioned, as Alistair O'Neill writes in an essay in *Design and Popular Entertainment* (2009), the scriptwriters describing the required daubs in the language of media art suspicion, with reference to such 'laughingstocks' as Picasso and Epstein. And while the unremarkable academic studies of early Ashby were made to a similarly art-illiterate brief, the curveball comes in the final group, those made by Ashby after absorbing Hancock's infantilist mantras. These were taken directly from a show of Grant's work at Zwemmer Gallery, London.

visiting a strange kind of posthumous 'success' on the character of Anthony Hancock and, perversely, uncomfortably, on Grant. The effect of knowing that all works were made by Grant leads one to suppose, as an artist, that his foray into the imaginary painterly vision of Anthony Hancock afforded him a kind of joyous release from the pressures of his own maturing and rigorous pictorial language. And it's for this reason, perhaps, that the dud paintings hold so much more ongoing power over artists than the 'good' paintings – they represent not good painting, but a fantasy of letting go, winging it, having fun for its own sake. That's why, on watching the film today, we can still imagine Grant, who died in 1997, chuckling with glee as he put the finishing touches to *Ducks in Flight Around the Eiffel Tower*. If you've 'never seen beetroot-coloured ducks before', then look no further.



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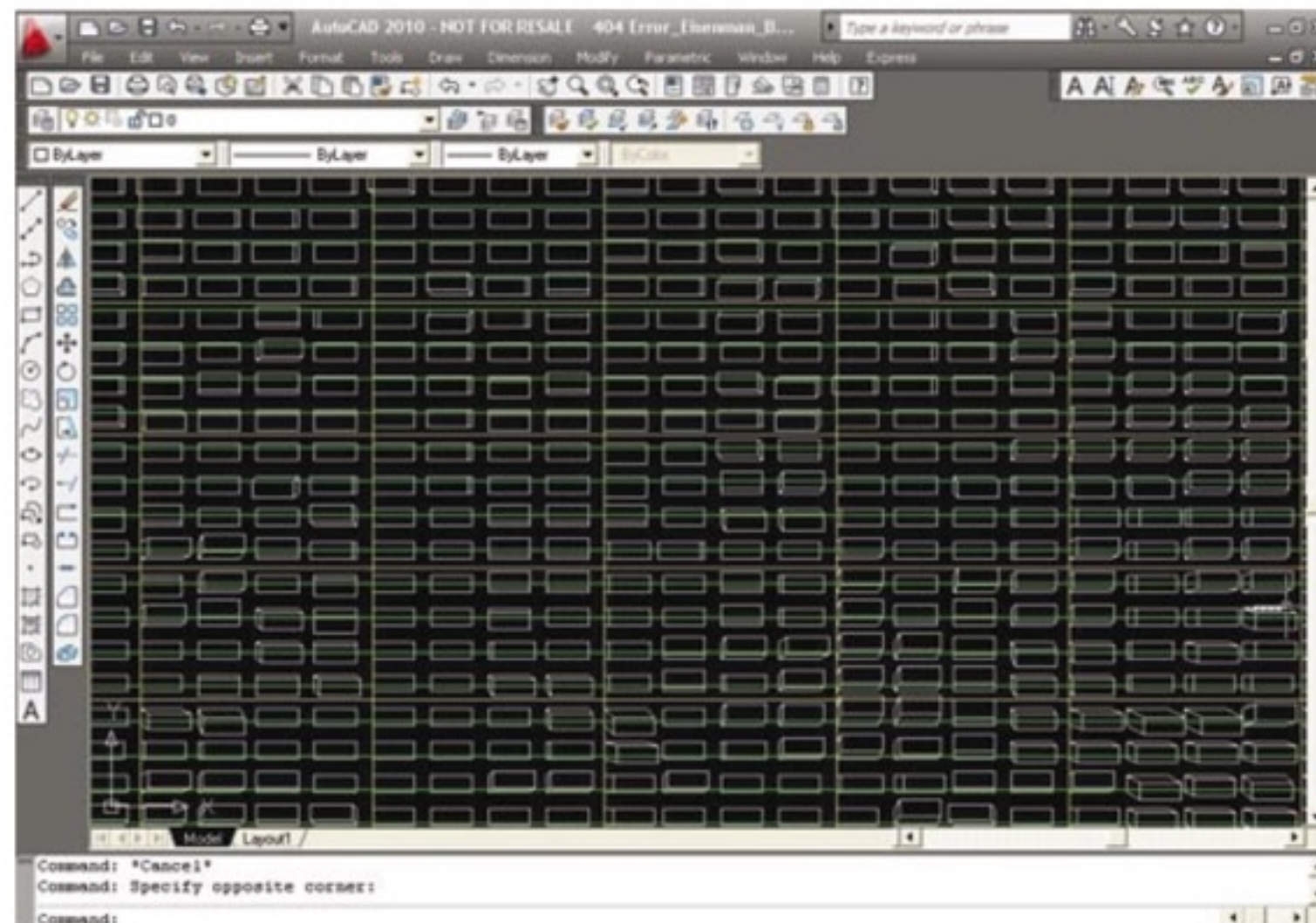
TECHNOBABBLE

Is today's software tomorrow's hardware?

DESIGN HAS ALWAYS HAD an intimate relationship with technology. It's there in the names we use to categorise the broad narrative of human history. As time unfolds, geological and meteorological names give way to the names of materials that we had learned to manipulate (watch out for the Ice Age, though – that one's a trick). Ages of stone, bronze and iron link the materiality of objects in a direct and physical way – reach out and you can touch it.

But things, as they say, ain't what they used to be. In a digital age, the marriage between the things we make and the technology we use to make them is consummated so completely that one becomes indistinguishable from the other.

In *404 ERROR: The Object Is Not Online*, at the CCA, Montreal, we see a fragment of the moment when digital design tools began to intersect with architectural objects. We see an IBM ThinkPad and a Compaq Deskpro displaying Greg Lynn's MicroStation drawings of his Embryological House (1997–2001), a pioneering experiment in digitally created architecture. Another laptop shows Peter Eisenman's AutoCAD development drawings for the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (2005) in Berlin. The drawings are shown in the context of their creation: screen, outdated computers. It's a statement that the development of design increasingly occurs in the realm of digital space and, furthermore, that this is not the simple translation of traditional design processes to a different realm. Indeed, the transition to digital tools changes the methodology of design itself. The decision to show these working drawings in



with their own fractional AI, advertised as 'now with hilarious sounds!' He argued that the economics of production, packaging, shipping and profit margins makes it inevitable that the chip that provides 'intelligence' will be as sophisticated as a tiny fraction of the cost of the toy allows.

The just-enough, just-affordable version of intelligence is the bleeping and winking in the objects around us. It's the thing that counts time for us, lights up a room if we move, deletes credit from our account when we swipe, turns on the demister or unlocks a door with a touch. Its gradual creep into the physical world changes how we deal with things, with stuff.

words **SAM JACOB**

their native software environment also tells us that digital space isn't generic, but defined by the particularities of the hardwares and softwares in which it occurs. And if nothing else, this is a concession to the rapid pace at which these technologies now develop. The Compaq, for example, was discontinued almost a decade ago and is practically Jurassic by today's standards.

As well as expanding possibilities, digital tools edit potentials. Think of the way Facebook formats the idea of friendship into a series of simplistic statements. Facebook's lame phrase 'It's complicated' as a means of expressing emotional or psychological depth stands as an example of the problematic relationship between the physical world and its digital reflection.

At a recent event at London's Architectural Association, Matt Webb, from BERG, a technology company also based in London, talked about objects containing forms of intelligence. He argued that instead of creating artificial intelligence of the type envisioned in sci-fi – such as *2001's* HAL – the reality is a fractional form of AI. Using the Argos superstore catalogue as a register of contemporary culture, Webb showed toy hamsters

Suddenly we're engaged in a relationship of cause and effect, where what we do or how we behave alters the properties of objects. And this relationship is now as much part of the activity of design as the shaping of substance.

This hard-soft kind of design will inevitably become more pervasive. As yet, however, its terms of engagement are both banal and invisible (always a dangerous combination). It's still perhaps too geeky or too novel to be interrogated by an engaged and critical debate. As the terms of design are increasingly set out through software – just as the idea of 'friendship' is somehow determined by Mark Zuckerberg – we should begin to develop a more nuanced understanding of the implications. Before long, the world will be made in the image of the software used to design it and its objects and environments will work with equally prescriptive routines. Maybe that means embracing the fact that coding as much a part of design as shaping material into form.

404 ERROR: The Object Is Not Online is at the Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal, through 13 February

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ACCOUNTING FOR TASTE

The curious relationship between food and tableware

ADDRESSING THE CROWD at London's Freemasons' Hall for the launch of the Noma cookbook, the Copenhagen restaurant's head chef René Redzepi talked about a sense of place and culture in the kitchen. The whole world knew about Danish design, Redzepi explained, but until he came along and got two Michelin stars for serving butterless mashed potato topped off with the skin from a pan of boiled milk, no one had imagined that all those beautiful plates and jugs and bowls might one day be filled with equally glorious food. The hall was filled with Danes, but not one of them upended the welcome pack of foraged sea buckthorn berries and spruce leaves on the floor and stomped out in protest at this slight to the national cuisine. If anything, they gave a complicit titter, perhaps remembering, like Redzepi, a childhood diet of neon-pink salami, processed cheese and heroic mounds of pale, rib-sticking carbohydrates.

Described in such terms, the beautiful porcelain produced in Denmark does seem a bit curious. Reason suggests to us that the design energies of a culture would be channelled towards those things it values most highly. The Dutch confected extraordinary Delft pyramids to showcase their prized tulips; Italy, where the exquisite female rear is offered such vociferous appreciation, does a nifty line in sofas and seating.

The fact that both Britain and Denmark were producing glorious, highly decorated dinner services in an era when the food in these countries was a running joke in Europe points to the possibility that here design was serving as a distraction. Just as the lacquered prop foodstuffs photographed for the packets of ready meals divert the mind from the mass-produced pulp within the cellophane, perhaps the fancy fowl, sapid flora and



to compare the taste of the same tea sipped from the different vessels. The designs ranged from Use.dev.org's daffy bowl arrangement with handles made from toy animals to fine unglazed porcelain teardrops by Nicola Zocca.

Curiously, to my palate, the smoky oolong tea tasted better from the former than the latter – the bowl allowed you to bury your nose in the steam, and the glaze kept the taste

words *HETTIE JUDAH*

plump grapes that winked from the glaze of Wedgwood's finest acted as psychological MSG for the boiled and stringy foodstuffs that they framed.

Beneath his mounds of decorative pebbles and wildflowers, Redzepi of course shies away from flashy tableware; the vernacular of serious nosh these days dictates a plain setting. It's notable that when Britain 'discovered' food in the 1960s, the new gastronomy coincided with a turn away from decorative pattern and curlicues towards the clean lines of David Mellor's silverware and the rustic Mediterranean simplicity of early Habitat.

DesignMarketo – a blessedly food-fixated platform for young designers – recently investigated how containers influence our perception of taste. It commissioned five designers to make five teacups apiece, and then invited visitors

smooth. Buying drinking vessels for the house beautiful, however, many would not likely have chosen the blobby pink container with a handle made out of a plastic collie over its more elegant neighbour. Our eyes tell us that the tea will taste better out of the prettier cup; our eyes may well be wrong.

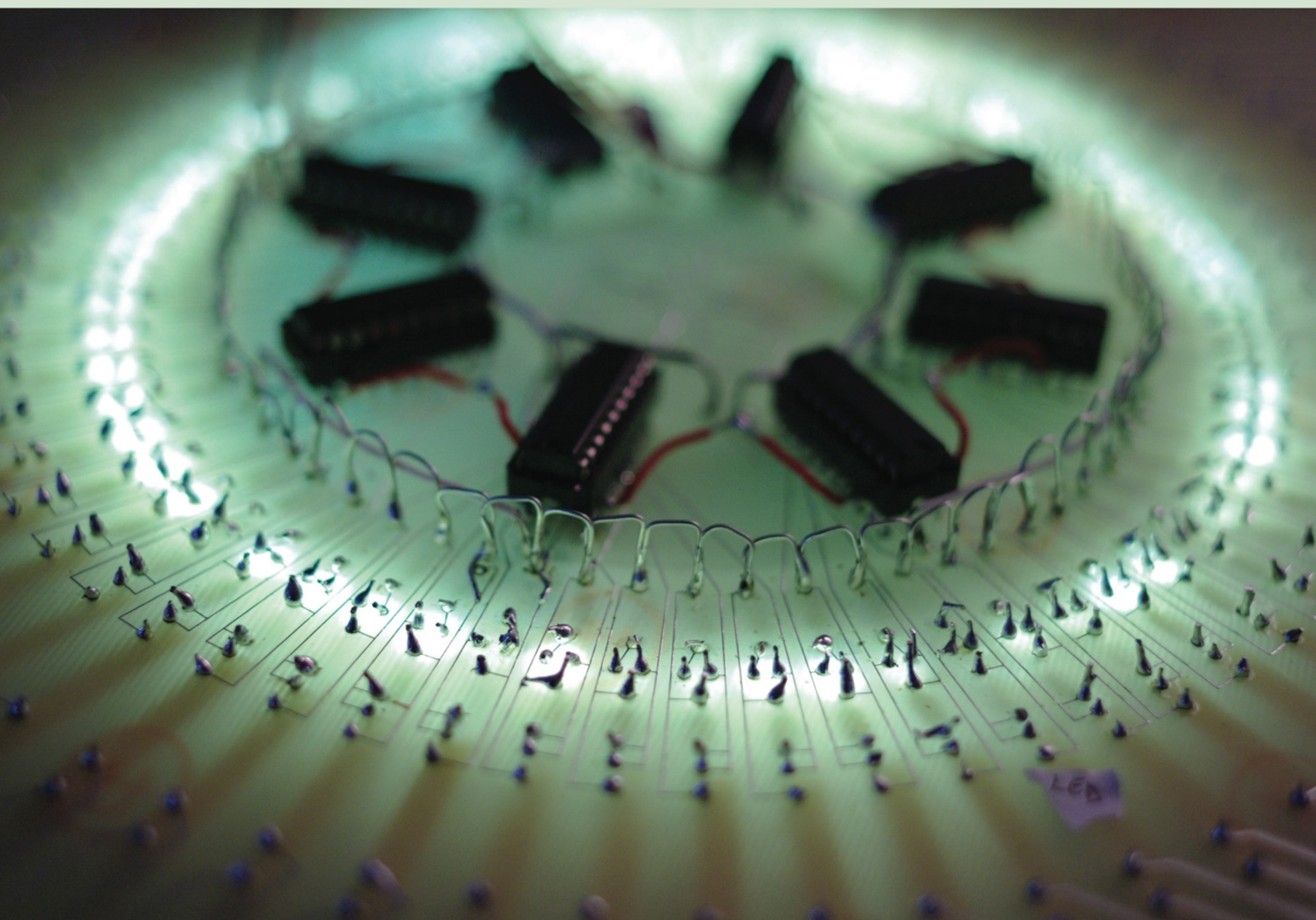
John Kennedy of TeaSmith, who brewed for the evening, was surprised by how reactions varied. As someone totally guided by the palate ("I know what I want the tea to taste like – if anything gets in the way of that, I don't like it"), Kennedy found himself faced by those for whom the look or feel of a vessel topped all other considerations.

That a container must satisfy such varied demands suggests that there's nothing particularly odd about the Danes making such tasty plates. Like David Mellor cutlery and eccentric teacups, they are mere set dressing for events that bring groups of people together – allowing them, if nothing else, to bond over how bad the food is.

DIRK BELL

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WHAT TO SEE THIS MONTH BY

JENNI LOMAX

Director, Camden Arts Centre, London

1 MODERN BRITISH SCULPTURE

Royal Academy, London
22 January – 7 April
www.royalacademy.org.uk

With a strong combination of curators – artist Keith Wilson is rangy, Tate Britain's Penelope Curtis is rigorous – *Modern British Sculpture* will consider more than a century of sculpture. Spanning the period from Victorian times to now, and exploring how British sculpture was inflected by the art of the British Empire and the US, the show promises some dramatic juxtapositions, including Philip King's glorious *Genghis Khan* (1963) against Alfred Gilbert's *Queen Victoria* (1887). There hasn't been a good survey of this subject since the Whitechapel's in the early 1980s; I think it will be an important show.



2 JACK GOLDSTEIN

Nottingham Contemporary
22 January – 27 March
www.nottinghamcontemporary.org

Since his death in 2003, Jack Goldstein's influence has become more widely recognised, particularly in terms of how he deals with appropriated images. He's a continual presence, really, in the minds of contemporary artists both in America – think of Richard Prince, for example – and here. While I know his films well, I'm very much looking forward to seeing the paintings he made during the 1980s. From what I know of them, they promise a cosmic intensity of points of light in the dark and a cinematic threat of impending catastrophe. This show will be a really good (and rare) opportunity to see Goldstein's work brought together.

3 SUSAN HILLER

Tate Britain, London
1 February – 15 May
www.tate.org.uk

I enjoyed spending time with an early Susan Hiller work at Raven Row's recent *Polytechnic* show in London. Her work really chimes with the atmosphere of the current touring British Art Show, where there is an overriding sense of communication with an otherworldliness that can't quite be defined. This retrospective includes work from the 1970s onwards, from her *Enquiries/Inquiries* (1973–5), which approaches subjectivity via differences in British and American encyclopaedias, to works like *Witness* (2000), with its audio accounts of extraterrestrial encounters. It seems perfectly timed.

4 BETWEEN HONEY AND ASHES, PARTS 1 AND 2

Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin
21 January – 23 March
www.douglashydegallery.com

Stanislaw Ignacy Witkiewicz is a fascinating and mysterious figure – a poet, art theorist and painter who died in 1939 and was a legend in the Polish avant-garde. I've only ever read about him, so I'm hoping to get to Dublin to see his work. The two parts of this show pair Witkiewicz with Miroslaw Balka, and the whole is an example, I think, of the ability of Douglas Hyde's director, John Hutchinson, to instigate intriguing conversations between artists that connect the past with the present in enlightening ways.



5 MAKING IS THINKING

Witte de With, Rotterdam
23 January – 1 May
www.wdw.nl

There have been a number of interesting group exhibitions recently that have proposed contemporary views on materiality and the handmade. *Making Is Thinking* offers a further take on the relationship between form and idea in one of my favourite 'art' cities, where design, applied art, fine art and architecture are all given equal exposure. The show includes 15 artists, some – such as Alexandre da Cunha and Eva Rothschild – whom I know and love, and others whose work I look forward to discovering.

from left: Philip King, *Genghis Khan*, 1963, painted plastic, 170 x 245 x 365 cm, private collection, © the artist; Stanislaw Ignacy Witkiewicz, *Ghost*, c. 1930, photograph, 9 x 14 cm, collection Ewa Franczak and Stefan Okolowicz

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Ee

ear to **experimental**

ear A portrait in profile is always a portrait of an ear.

earth colours Pigments that are obtained by mining, such as yellow ochre and umber.

easel See **experimental**.

eating ritual The eating of the body of a god is known as theophagy, and may be performed symbolically through the consumption of a food or symbolic material. In fertility rituals, harvested grain may be the reborn god of vegetation, known as canapés. Paradoxically, canapés actually inhibit fertility as they may make the breath smell repugnant, or small pieces of them may fall within the inner sleeve of the jacket (if male), or onto the exposed foot (if female), thus stimulating the flight instinct.

echinus An architectural term describing the convex element of a capital that is directly below the abacus.

eclecticism A systemic style system with a feigned variousness indicator strategy locus variant.

edit culture It is common in literary publishing for a work to be so changed by editorial process and publicity that the author becomes creatively coequal with, or even secondary to, the editor and publisher. Similarly, in contemporary art, the **dealer** may silently determine the form and presentation of an artwork so much that, were the information less private, it would be an embarrassing liability to the artist and gallery. These practices share similarities with **DJ culture** in that a gallery (or curator) confers **aura context valuemment status** to an artist, and it is the 'DJ' (the gallery/curator as a **brandment locus**) rather than the artist who is the star.

efflorescence An excited variegated coloured blotching on the faces of the rich at the moment of purchase of an artwork costing over 1 million (dollars, pounds or euros).

emperor's new clothes See **schlock**, **schmutter**.

emerald green A common name for copper acetoarsenite, or CI pigment green 21, an extremely toxic blue-green chemical, used by Monet, Van Gogh and Cézanne. Ingestion causes vesicle formation and eventual sloughing of the mucosa in the mouth, pharynx and oesophagus. Also abdominal pain, cyanosis, bloody diarrhoea, weakness, spasms, hypothermia, delirium, coma, convulsions, acute tubular necrosis and death.

emporiatics The branch of medicine that deals with health problems as may affect international travellers. Also a problem art-tendency characterised by a submissive obsession with airport architecture and travel signage, and enervated qualities of desensitised fatigue.

entasis An almost imperceptible convex tapering (an apparent swelling) in the shaft of a column. See also **yni**.

epigraphy The study of written inscriptions. In contemporary art exhibitions, the display captions accompanying exhibits are often revered for their textual mastery.

epic A commonplace device in contemporary art whereby more (bigger, larger, taller, etc) is considered to be a value in its own right, simply by virtue of scale increasement. See also **awesome**.

equality locus paradox An essential contestability paradigm empathy posit. Well-intentioned arts professional A postulates that 'all persons are equally intelligent'. Arts professional B, also well intentioned, replies (truthfully), saying, 'I am too stupid to understand the postulate'.

ethnicity Persons who write letters to liberal newspapers on the subject of ethnicity in the arts often voluntarily choose to reveal their skin colouring. Self-descriptions such as 'I am black' and 'I am white' are common. Such correspondence may be torn carefully from the newspaper in which it is published and placed in alternate diagonal rows, so as to serve as a board on which to play the game of draughts.

ethyl alcohol See **excess**.

evaluation The arts are evaluated by artists, critics, collectors, curators, dealers, administrators, bureaucrats, etc, but not by the taxpaying public. In 2005 it was proposed that a National Visual Arts Audiences Association be formed, so as to represent the public interest in respect of art and culture as presented by publicly funded arts bodies such as galleries and museums. It was imagined that the NVAAA would comment on exhibition standards, admission charges, catering and exhibition catalogues (checks for intelligibility). Public arts bodies responded with alarmed hostility to this proposal, claiming that their own board of council members should be counted as members of the public instead. The scheme went into abeyance after an NVAAA committee member was attacked and had her ear bitten off by the directors of two major public galleries at a fundraising dinner, subsequently dying from an infection, but the directors receiving massive public support and only token sentences for their assault.

excess See **efflorescence**.

excrement See **excellence**.

executive desktop toy art A category of art predicated on novelty values related to the plaything entertainments that executives place on their desks. Desktop art is scaled up to be physically huge and costly, but is completely identical in principle.

exhibition, special A special art exhibition is a show of art in a public gallery's dark, remote basement area, in distinction to its **gift shop**, which enjoys prestigious, just-off-centre placement on the ground floor.

experimental Redundant term for **challenging**.

words **NEAL BROWN**



Future Generation Art Prize



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Brazil

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Daniel Birnbaum, Okwui Enwezor, Yuko Hasegawa,
Ivo Mesquita, Eckhard Schneider, Robert Storr, Ai Weiwei



CONSUMED

The pick of things you didn't know you really needed. Words OLIVER BASCIANO

01
Swedish fashion label Acne has set up an open-submission fund to support emerging artists in the publication of their first monographs. It's a nice, simple idea, and they have a nice, simple way of raising the cash: commissioning more-established artists to use a plain white T-shirt as a blank canvas and selling the results in limited runs of 800. Mexican artist Stefan Brüggenmann is the first to undertake the task, mixing a smeary brushstroke of grey pigment with the maxim 'Sometimes I think, sometimes I don't'.

www.acnestudios.com

02
Do you think, in that dark time leading up to his death, Jean-Michel Basquiat could have consoled himself with the thought that at some point in the future there would be a range of boxed chocolates bearing his motifs and name? Well, perhaps not. It might not be in the best possible taste, if you excuse the pun, but this tin of Chocolate Pearls sure beats the stale Vanilla Fudges at the bottom of the post-Christmas box of Quality Street.

www.ligneblancheparis.com

03
The harmonograph was a mid-nineteenth-century invention that provided amusement to society of the time, producing drawn spiral ellipses on paper, its two pendulums controlling the movements of, respectively, pen and paper. Artist Nick Laessing has constructed a more complex, room-size version of the historic device, this one using several giant pendulums swinging at variable frequencies to produce this series of unique works.

www.greyarea.eu

04
There's a grimness to Martin Gale's paintings of country scenes that is completely at odds with the blinkered nostalgia the subject matter frequently evokes. In Gale's work the rain is heavy and ever-present, and life is hard and a bit dull. This print by Gale, in an edition of 40 made for the Irish Museum of Modern Art, is a prime example of the artist's style: a circus tent stripped of its intrinsic *joie de vivre* by the muted palette and complete absence of human life.

www.imma.ie

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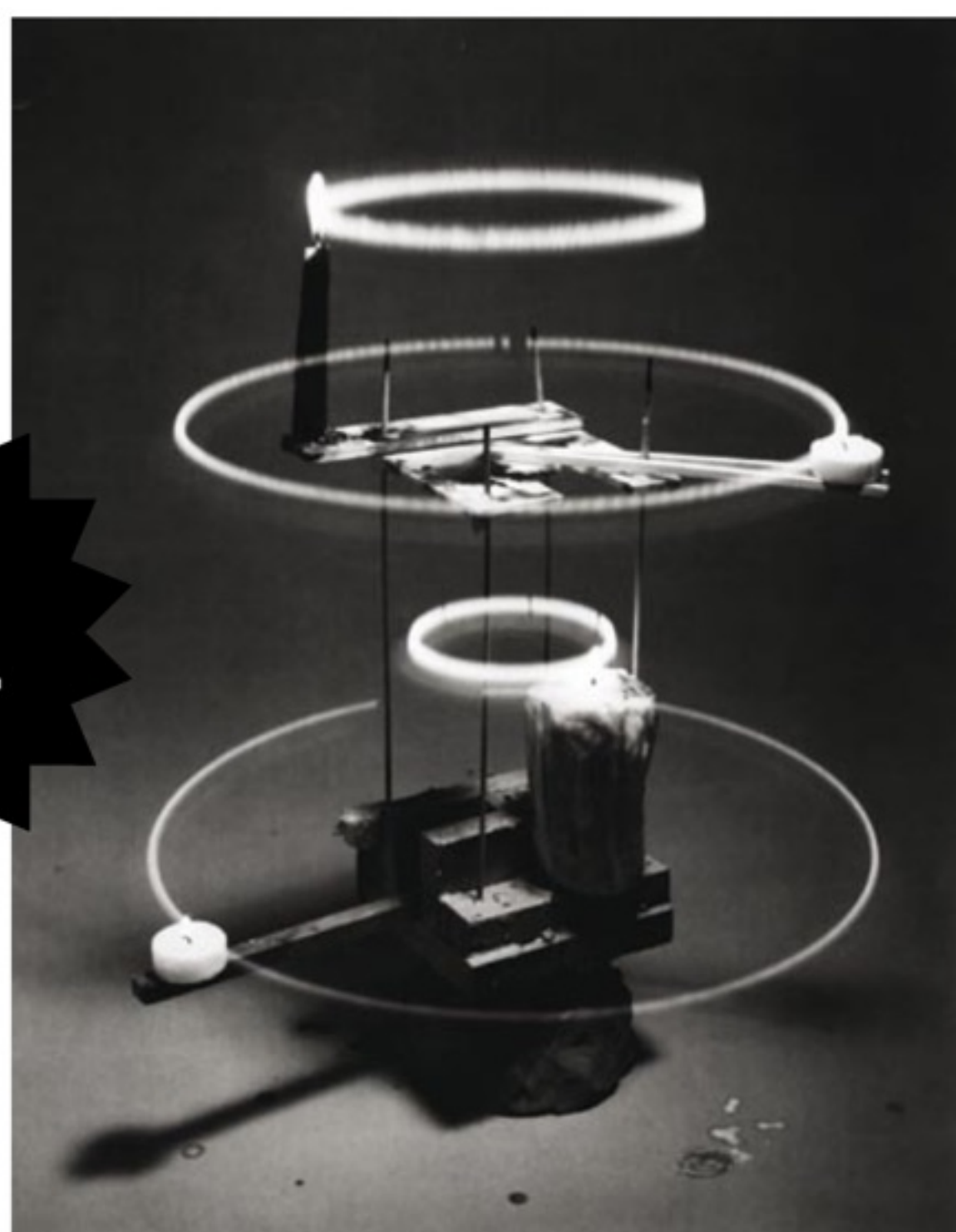
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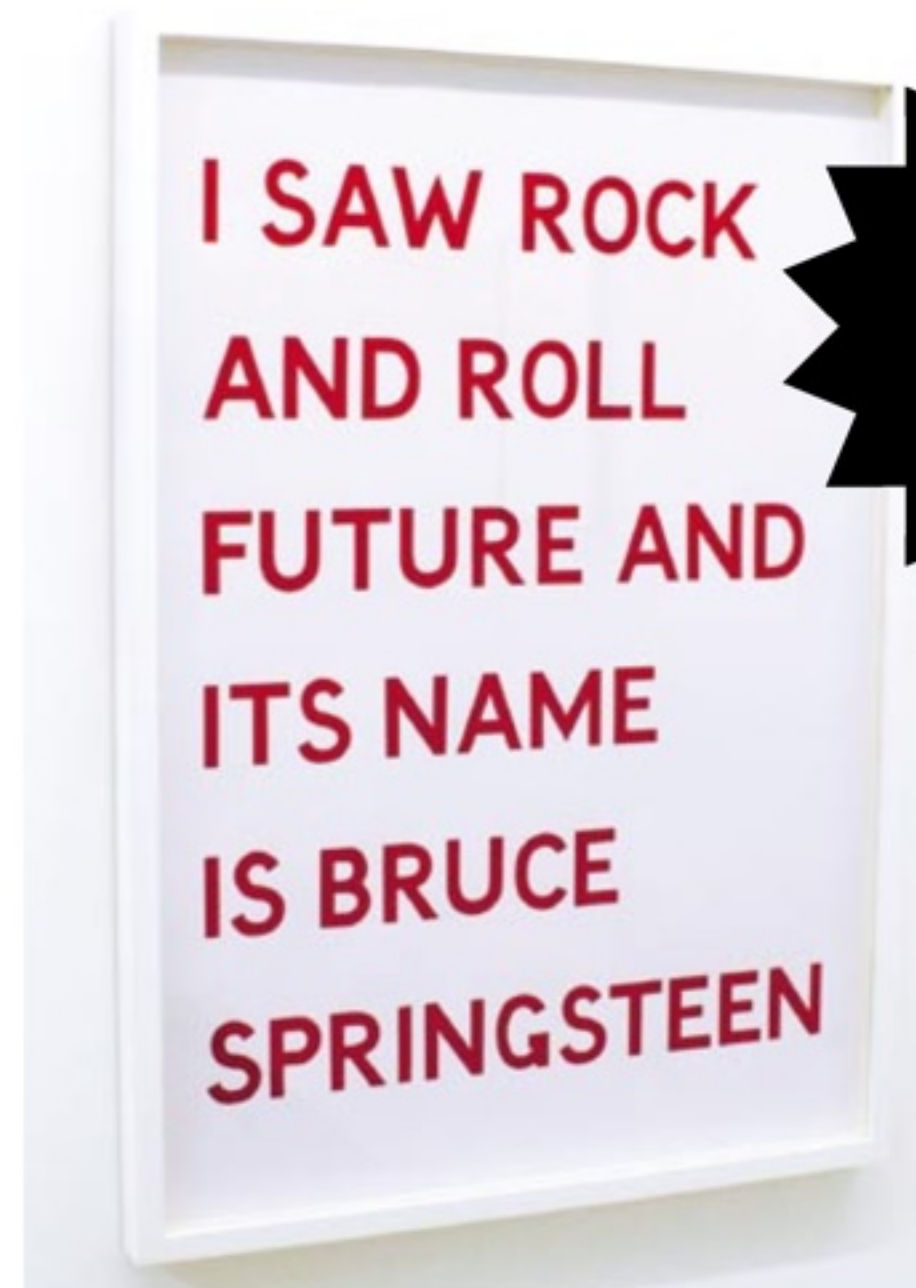
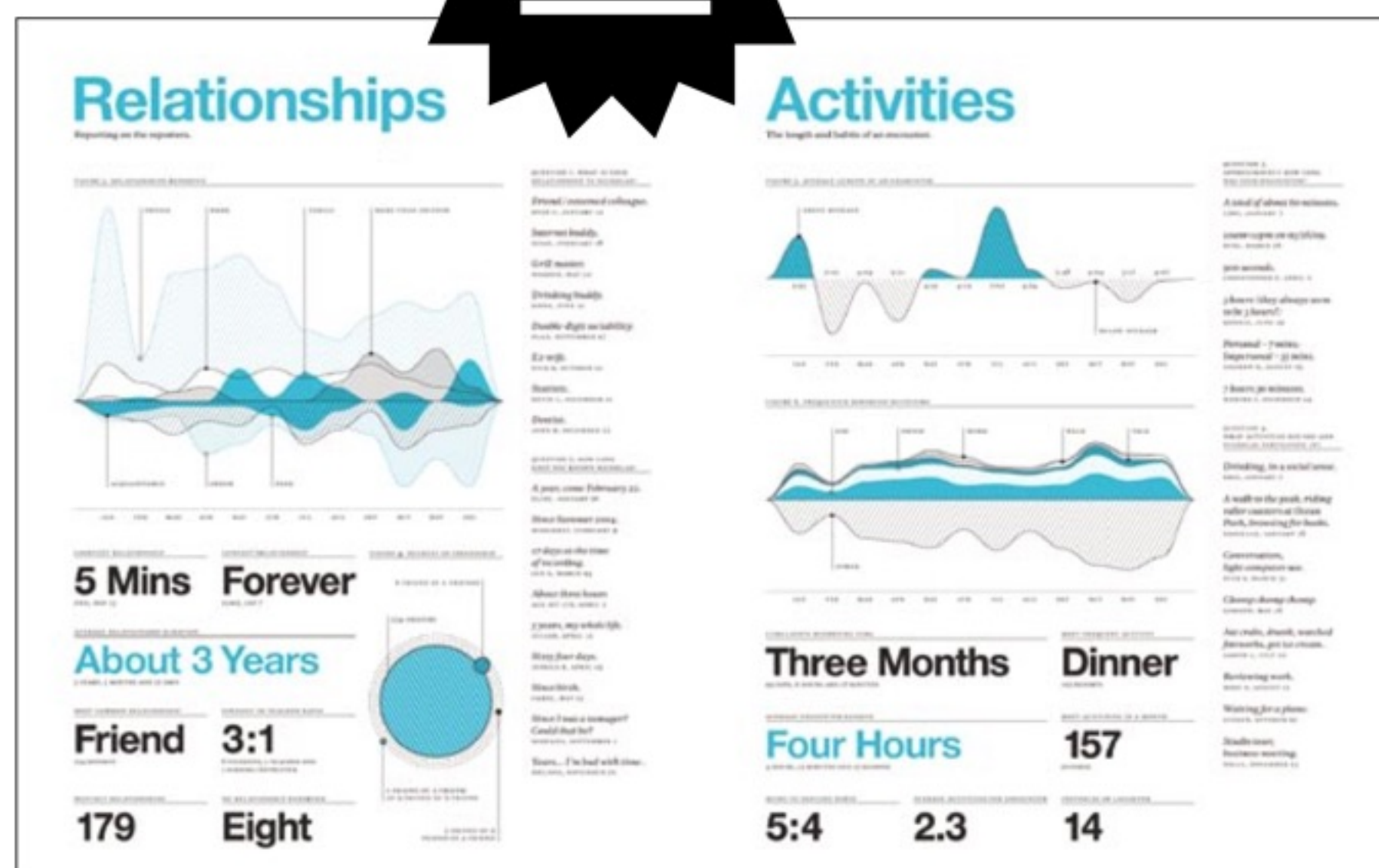
Helen Storey, *Say Goodbye* (2010) London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London
Science by Professor Tony Ryan OBE, University of Sheffield. Textiles Trish Belford, University of Ulster.
Model Pixie © Profile Model Management Ltd; make up and hair Sam Basham; Photo John Ross.

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05
Taiyo Onorato & Nico Krebs byline themselves as photographers, but they could just as easily be labelled sculptors, building the subject matter – typically idiosyncratic assemblages imbued with a healthy amount of absurdity – for their carefully lit photographic works. To coincide with a show at the Museum Bellpark in Kriens in February (and to raise money for an accompanying catalogue), the duo have produced an edition of 20, depicting one such kinetic folly of four candles orbiting an axis.

www.tonk.ch

06
There are a few things the Internet seems set to replace – books, handwritten letters – whose passing we justifiably mourn. If it were to succeed with the art fair, however, our reaction might be quite different. The VIP Fair does away with the temporary tents, that huge carbon footprint and all the sore feet, conducting the entire business online for a week this January. The fair's founding galleries include David Zwirner, Max Hetzler and White Cube; Hauser & Wirth will be 'exhibiting' Louise Bourgeois's *Untitled* (2005), pictured, so expect a lot of money-changing mouse clicks.

www.vipartfair.com

07
For the past five years, Nicholas Felton has been producing an annual report. Not for his graphic design company, Feltron, but for his life (2009 edition pictured). With tidy, systematic graphs, charts, flow diagrams and mapping systems, the designer chronicles the conversations he's had, the places he's been, the music, food and books he's consumed. A life lived in data. In 2010 Felton's father died, and this year's edition will be the most ambitious analysis yet, collating the documentation of a life passed.

theofficeof.feltron.com

08
This screenprint by Sean Edwards, in an edition of 50 and part of a new set of prints from London's Limoncello Gallery, quotes *Rolling Stone* critic Jon Landau's famous response to a 1974 concert by the Boss: 'I saw my rock'n'roll past flash before my eyes. And I saw something else: I saw rock and roll future and its name is Bruce Springsteen.' The work concerns itself with ideas of proclamation and self-fulfilling prophecy: when Columbia, Springsteen's record company, read the piece, they used the prediction as the centre of the marketing campaign that would make the singer a star.

www.limoncellogallery.co.uk

Bethan Huws Whitechapel Gallery

Capelgwyn

29 January
–
18 March 2011

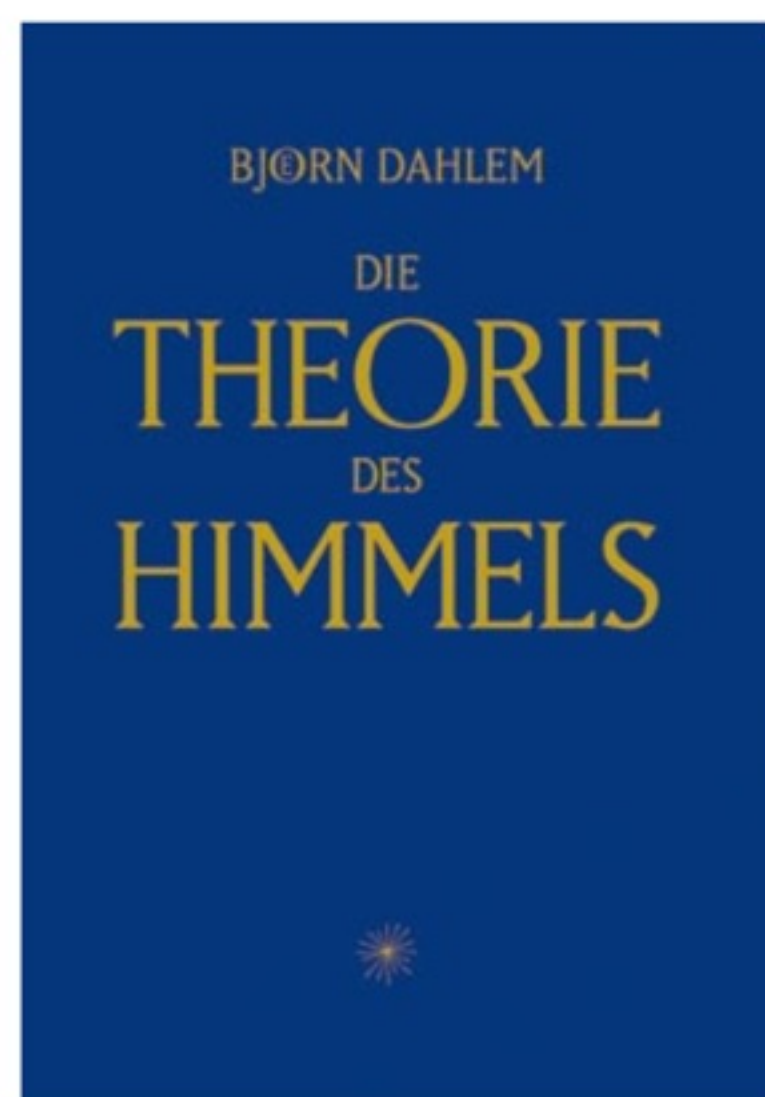
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whitechapelgallery.org



DIGESTED

It's what we think you should swallow, or spit out



BJÖRN DAHLEM: DIE THEORIE DES HIMMELS

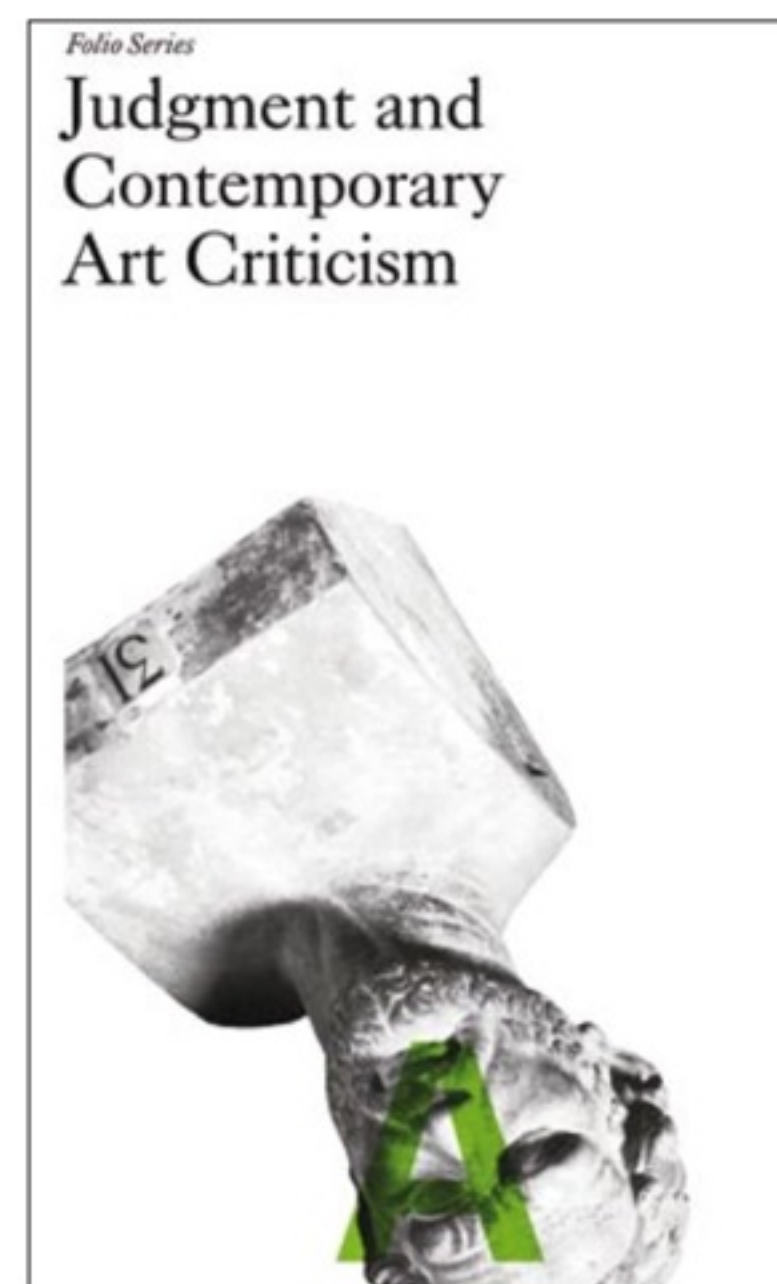
This monographic treatment of Björn Dahlem, produced to coincide with the artist's exhibition at Kunst im Tunnel, Düsseldorf, through 16 January, is to be commended first and foremost on its cover design. The use of royal-blue linen, with no decoration apart from the gold foil capitals of the title itself (borrowed from Kant's 1755 *Allgemeine Naturgeschichte und Theorie des Himmels*), is evocative of tomes lying forgotten on the shelves of obscure academic libraries. It would seem, then, that you can at least judge an artist by his book cover: Dahlem's practice taps into the rich history of theoretical physics and the mystical, quasi-scientific thinking that has historically surrounded it. Gertrud Peters, in a text that prologues 150 pages of work by Dahlem, notes the Kant reference as well as connections to Caspar David Friedrich and Joseph Beuys, while in another essay Dominikus Müller addresses the dichotomy between Dahlem's esoteric subject matter and the DIY materialism in the formal construction of his works. Oliver Basciano

Distanz, €39.90 (hardcover)

America By Jean Baudrillard

Sex! Reading one of the most influential texts of the late twentieth century 24 years after it first appeared (in French), there are times when the great philosopher comes across like some sort of bumbling, befuddled old uncle. *Beach sex!* Today's America has 'Boy George, Michael Jackson and David Bowie' – gender-benders, he splutters (although two of these are the product of an English feyness). *Explosive sex!* That's what idols of the previous generation (let's not worry that Bowie is of the previous generation) had to offer, he boasts, and now people don't even have a sex, let alone dynamite sex. *Post-orgy sex!* That said, as a study of a culture that makes something out of nothing (or nothing out of something) and figures out a way to live with it, *America* remains unmatched. *Reagan-cancer-menopause sex!* Partly because, in the manner of some old-fashioned poet, Baudrillard's written form is quite wonderfully matched with his content. 'For me there is no truth to America', he famously booms near the beginning of the book. 'I ask of the Americans only that they be Americans. I do not ask them to be intelligent, sensible, original.' And off he goes in unhinged-uncle mode. *Sex!* Oh yes, rereading the book, that's what seems to be on Baudrillard's mind most of the time. *Mark Rappolt*

Verso, £9.99/\$19.99 (softcover)



JUDGMENT AND CONTEMPORARY ART CRITICISM

Edited by Melanie O'Brian & Jeff Khonsary

Is art criticism 'beautiful writing about beautiful objects and their beautiful makers' (Suzanne Perling Hudson) or a 'textual bikini' covering the embarrassment of the art object in the open (Boris Groys)? The 'crisis in art criticism' has been blustering away for years now, but this book, emerging out of a 2009 conference, at least gets to the heart of the matter quickly: where is the judgement in art criticism? The 'this is bad', 'this is good'? And so, the lively contributors, including Tirdad Zolghadr, Diedrich Diederichsen and Maria Fusco, tour the contemporary problems facing the critic. Diederichsen is the only one to make a passionate case for the necessity of judgement, while Fusco is more circuitous, writing 'around' the problem and proposing that the writer induce something in art, rather than deduce from it. What emerges is a picture of art critics as precarious dancers, negotiating changing artistic tracks, tiptoeing around social awkwardness, financial realities and the weight of history to fall on their judgements; but also a hugely stratified discourse, in which public intellectuals appear to behave as an academy, without ever really performing the work of one or listening to others who are talking and writing about the very same problems.

Laura McLean-Ferris

Artspeak/Fillip Editions, €15/\$20 (softcover)

GALLERIES.

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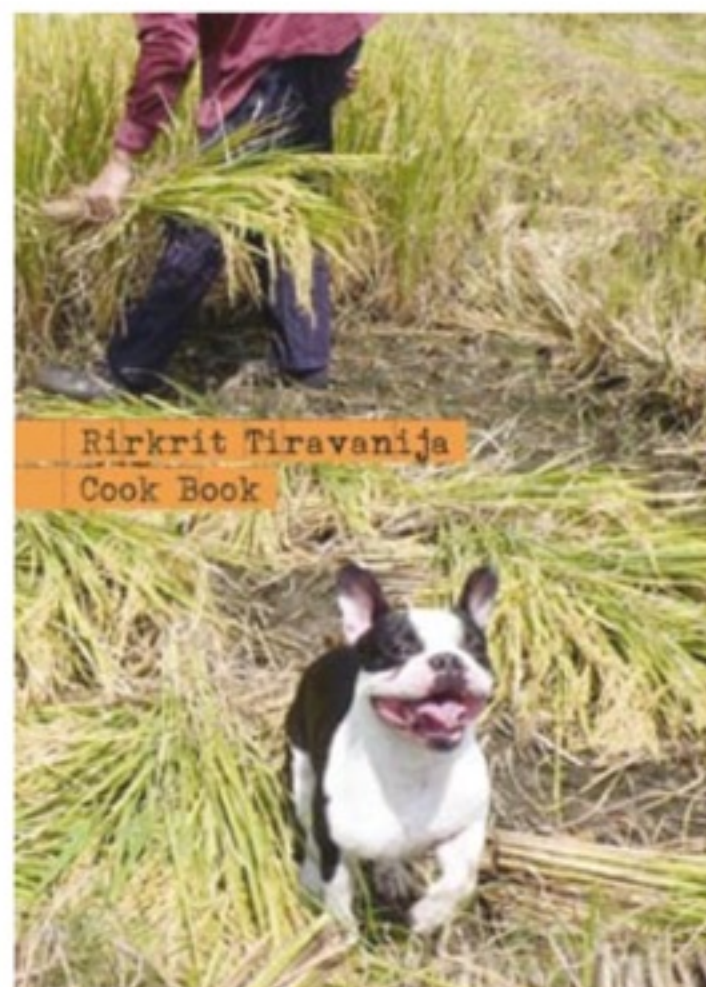
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Cook Book By Rirkrit Tiravanija

A catalogue to accompany the artist's recent retrospective at the Kunsthalle Bielefeld, *Cook Book* is true to the format of the celebrity recipe collection: shots of the chef at work, still lifes of ingredients and views of 'ordinary' home life. (OK, for traditionalists there is also a foreword in the form of an interview and an afterword in the form of the art-historical essay, complete with images of a number of the artist's noncooking works.) Indeed, as we look at Tiravanija monkeying around his home in Chiang Mai, Thailand, dressed in T-shirt, boxer shorts and apron, occasionally wedging a couple of (what look like) boiled eggs between his glasses and his eyes, it's all surprisingly Jamie Oliver.

But if *Cook Book* mimics certain manifestations of contemporary celebrity culture, it is also a denial of art as anything special. Or one could equally state that it mimics a culture that celebrates the ordinary. In fact, you might view this book as objectifying the problem of art in society today, oscillating between the extraordinary and the ordinary.

It's something of an irony that Tiravanija's work is so closely associated with a particular theory: relational aesthetics as developed by Nicolas Bourriaud during the mid-1990s. After all, the old situationist rallying cry 'No more theory, nothing but practice' might also be that of the 'Buddhist revolutionary' (as the essay dubs the Thai artist). So am I suggesting that you buy *Cook Book* for the recipes rather than as a record of a series of artworks? Perhaps instead you could view it as an emphatic answer to the popular reaction to much contemporary art: 'Even I could do that shit'. With *Cook Book*, this artist appears to be saying, 'Well, yes, you can'. *MR*

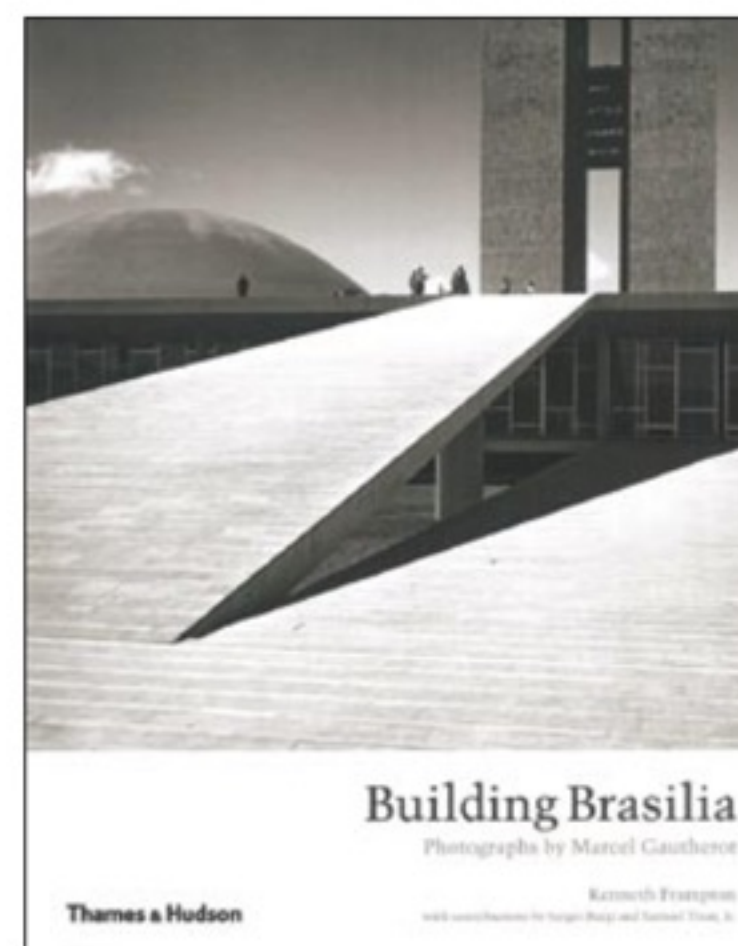
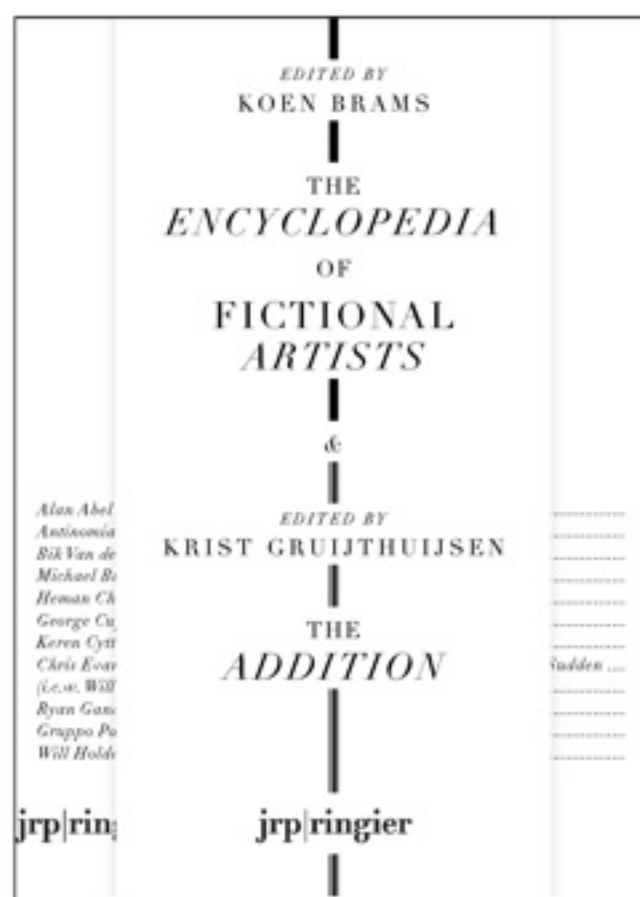
River Books, £25 (hardcover)

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF FICTIONAL ARTISTS & THE ADDITION

Edited by Koen Brams & Krist Gruijthuijsen

A gifted painter, influential among the Impressionists in Paris, Claude Lantier (1842–70) was an early proponent of *plein-air* painting, before becoming consumed by one particular painting, working on it to the point of madness and then suicide. His story epitomises the radical spirit of Impressionism, and yet it is a fiction, written by Zola in *The Masterpiece* (1886). Lantier is typical of the figures who populate *The Encyclopedia of Fictional Artists*, an index to the lives of artists residing in literature as organised by Koen Brams. Fictional artists occasionally bump into historical figures, creating a complex interlacing: American artist Nat Tate (as seen by William Boyd), for example, is praised by Clement Greenberg in the entry devoted to him. A troubled alcoholic, Tate, too, died by his own hand, raising the question: why is fiction so tough on artists? (And why are they overwhelmingly male? Women, such as Amy March from Louisa May Alcott's 1868 novel, *Little Women*, give up painting when they marry.) As Brams points out, this book is populated by a particular type of tortured, egocentric soul, the kind who often destroys his own work. In the accompanying *Addition*, work by contemporary artists on the subject of fictionality provides an illuminating contrast to the stories society tells itself about artists, not least for showing how what is expected from them in the collective imaginary so quickly turns itself into something more concrete. *LMF*

JRP|Ringier, £32/€39 (softcover)



Building Brasilia Photographs by Marcel Gautherot Text by Kenneth Frampton

It would be easy to write off this hefty monograph on the building of Brasília – and Marcel Gautherot's documentary photographs contained herein – as mere erotica for architects: sensuous lines of South American Modernism and pictures of beefy builders for the profession to work itself into a lather over. That would be crude, though, for the book also contains a pithy history and analysis of the ambitious project from the eminent Kenneth Frampton and does not allow the subject to overshadow a critique of Gautherot's own work. Thankfully the photographer's interest was not merely that of a building enthusiast but of a social documentarian too, and his lens was equally occupied with the human stories behind the curvilinear designs he captures so well. The construction workers, for example, failed to receive the premium accommodation promised to them at the outset, in the collective housing areas within the Pilot Plan, the city's centre, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This fact lends poignancy to the portraits Gautherot produced, which Frampton sums up neatly as 'the forgotten stills of a social realist film'. *OB*

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● GREAT CRITICS AND THEIR IDEAS

In this new series, the writers who have shaped the way we think about art talk frankly about what's on their minds

NO 1: BAUDELAIRE ON ART AND DRUGS



Born in 1821, the French poet Charles Baudelaire was a friend to the generation of artists rising in Paris between the 1840s and 60s who made modern art possible. He once wrote that 'doing evil' was a unique and supreme delight. The symbolist poet Arthur Rimbaud, who advocated 'a complete derangement of the senses', praised Baudelaire as 'the king of poets, a true god'. Baudelaire died in 1867.

interview by **MATTHEW COLLINGS**

ARTREVIEW You're the poet who was addicted to opium. You once said, 'Common sense tells us that the things of the earth exist only a little, and that true reality is only in dreams.' What are we to make of groovy contemporary art that takes drug experience as its subject?

CHARLES BAUDELAIRE Ah, yes, Charles Ray exhibits a photo of himself on LSD. The image is curved, and presented on a curved wall – it appears perpendicular to the floor at first, but then when you notice the distortion you get the joke about warped perception. Jane and Louise Wilson document themselves taking LSD for the first time. We see them facing the camera side by side, describing their experience as their minds start to alter, laughing and giggling. Jiri Georg Dokoupil paints his own face comically distorted so it seems like a wild-man mask, with blood coming out the nose and the words 'sex drugs rock and roll' arranged around the skull like a joke halo. Rodney Graham makes a video of his experiences on the drug Halcion. Damien Hirst calls an abstract dot painting *LSD* and another one *Valium*. Francis Alÿs walks around Copenhagen for seven days, takes a different drug each day and documents the experience. All these works are ironic about the notion of altered states. They remind us of a 1960s cultural mindset, a mythology in which I myself feature as one of the heroes, along with Rimbaud, Coleridge, Thomas de Quincey and others. In it, a profound connection exists between art and drugs, the link being the realm of the 'far out'. But the reminder is curiously distanced.

AR Yes, the profundity has been drained away.

CB The artists have a strange dry attitude towards the idea, as if they are not sure if they want to update it or destroy it. What was the idea anyway?

AR That there is such a thing as a higher state than normality. Not just a distorted state. It is something like religious revelation, the visions of a saint in a desert. Drugs, art and madness all access the realm of the hot burning truth of existence.

CB You are so right. And certain art-historical images became the icons of this mindset. Think of Dalí's menacing distortions, and the frolicking sex-nudes and hellish nightmares of Bosch. A sort of shock-therapy motivation unites Surrealism and this great Northern Renaissance innovator: the unrighteous must be jolted into repentant awareness of the hypocrisy of their daily lives.

AR Yes, Bosch paints the human body and scenes of nature realistically but with all the wires of meaning deliberately crossed.

CB In Bosch nature is also antinature, and what it means to be human is always being questioned, so that the human state seems more disturbing than reassuring. As with typical acid disorientation, Bosch's painted visions are grounded in recognisable human experience, and intensity of detail plays a major role. But the way the details are organised means that beauty often goes with horror.

AR The stoner side is his staggering powers of structuring and ordering colours and shapes so they seem endlessly visually rich.

CB For me, the LSD feel of Salvador Dalí's art is due to a combination of elements: one abstract and one illustrative. The first is a sort of psychic spatial flipping effect: something seems clearly itself but in the same frame it is also clearly something else. Upon this central good trick, Dalí's creepy symbolic images – the second element – his insects crawling out of human flesh, giraffes on fire, elephants with the legs of mosquitoes, melting watches, etc – are a more obvious rhetorical flourish. But still these symbols, Freudian clichés – carefully arranged by Dalí to be easily discovered, so a Freudian reading is guaranteed – are very much part of the LSD disorientation effect.

AR When Max Ernst, in his more graphically illustrational images, makes sexual excitement combine with a horrible sense of inhuman otherness, that too is trippy.

CB Indeed. It's curious how undruggy some of the artists are in reality. Dalí's pictures suggest LSD paranoia, but when LSD guru Timothy Leary praised Dalí for being someone who could paint LSD without ever having taken LSD, he got it right that Dalí was not on LSD – to bring to completion such tightly controlled, hyperrestrained technical images, he had to be extremely functional. Of course, many artists have experimented with getting out of their minds, but not necessarily the ones the popular imagination associates with mind alteration. What little historical evidence there is for Bosch's life story suggests that he was a respectable, religious, wealthy man who played a prominent role in society. He was far from the druggy, mad or Satanist projection of 'Bosch' that fascinated both high and low culture during the 1960s.

AR Do you think that art that actually originated in the 1960s artworld obeys in its inner structures some of the same druggy laws that pertain with the imagery of Bosch et al?

CB Well, conceptual art is stoner because it's a mind-fuck. It isolates a bit of random meaning, follows up a random bit of internal structure that the meaning-fragment contains and presents the result as a form of significance. The audience for art like this agrees it is convincing because, even though it's a non sequitur, it has a sense of menace: normality is being deconstructed.

AR Sigmar Polke said drugs were important to him because they showed him that 'normality' was meaningless. His mature style emerged against a background of 1960s and 70s conceptual art.

CB You really know your stuff, Matt! I think Polke's hallucinogen experience is expressed more in his approach to colour than anything else. He arranges these manufactured surfaces, sometimes imagistic, sometimes just patterned, usually shoddy and brutal or stupid and light, and then he does this pooled flowing colour over them, a type of colour that seems alchemical and fugitive, made of unfamiliar elements and possessing surprisingly beautiful local effects.

● GREAT CRITICS AND THEIR IDEAS

AR Where conceptual art is all mind, its enemy, formalist painting, is all sensuality. Brice Marden's waxy muted colour slabs suggest themselves at this point. The stoned sensibility, deliciously alert to structural intricacy in music, can enjoy the same thing in Marden's minimal colour arrangements, in which simplicity gives way to complexity, and points of focus constantly change – while every newly perceived configuration possesses a sense of inevitability and authority.

CB Yes, the jarring confident energy of the cocaine high is very far away, while the lovely swooning staring that the spliff and the chillum bring on are very near. And yet it was cocaine use that eventually did Marden in – he was taking so much of it, as he admitted in interviews in the 1980s. He had to seek professional help to get over it.

AR I suppose the reigning drug images remain the crazy classics. What makes Bosch and the Surrealists druglike is the distorted, irrational picture of the world their art presents, a picture which is simultaneously grounded in recognisable nature and in ordinary human experience. You are being told that this experience can't be trusted.

CB On drugs our sensations become isolated and heightened, so much so that they can seem overwhelming. On acid we giggle at the way the ordinary becomes hyper: the sound of footsteps, the sight of veins in your hand, your sense of time passing, the distance between where you're sitting and the door on the other side of the room. They can suddenly all expand vastly and you become lost in the immensities, as if you're actually drowning in your own perceptions. Parts of Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights* are beautiful but other parts are horrible, and you can never be sure what's coming next. Pleasure turns to repulsion. This is the madness element in the art and drugs equation. Any anxiety of whatever degree can easily become all the anxiety in the world, which of course is the schizophrenic's daily reality.

AR For most trippers, the acid will wear off. You peak after an hour, the peak lasts a couple of hours and then the comedown starts. During the peak, your senses really are deranged. Nature becomes pointillist dots, like Postimpressionist paintings. In fact, once when I was tripping as a teenager and had recently been reading a book about the Impressionists, I felt I could truly see the connection between art and drugs. Then I felt an indescribable sensation in my leg. I realised it was pain: another teenager had shot me with an air rifle (fortunately low calibre). He saw a pretentious asshole skipping through the fields on drugs and thought it would be funny to bring him down.

CB Ha, ha, well that's a good segue to 2011. In the twenty-first century you've got eager consumerists, not ecstatic seekers of knowledge. It was clear all that terrible shit was coming, even at the height of the psychedelic freak-out moment. When Frank Zappa chants: "Discorporate!" and "Unbind your mind!" on the Mothers of Invention album *We're Only in It for the Money*, the joke is on the self-delusory justifications that sensitive 1960s drug-takers professed: the self-serving self-indulgence that wealthy Western hedonists actually sought when they told themselves they were seeking self-loss. In 2011 no one even

Parts of Bosch's 'Garden of Earthly Delights' are beautiful but other parts are horrible, and you can never be sure what's coming next. Pleasure turns to repulsion. This is the madness element in the art and drugs equation

pretends to seek the astral plane. They use cocaine for energy, and cannabis for heightened sensuality (and to calm down cocaine when the energy is too jarring).

AR It's a big step from Coleridge writing 'Kubla Khan' on opium in the eighteenth century to Robert Crumb's *Stoned Agin!* But from Crumb and Zappa to now is no step at all. Zappa took no drugs. Crumb took lots. But they both satirise the emptiness of the drug moment that we're still living now.

CB Yes, the reason twenty-first-century people disorient their minds with drugs but no longer seek Rimbaud's total sensory derangement – the reason Bosch, if he were to come back to life, would probably not be found in Berlin's Bar 25 having a lovely mellow chill-out after three days of raving on ecstasy and speed – is because drugsters in your time don't have the old romantic sense of a decayed and corrupted civilisation whose lies need to be seen through.

AR Charles Ray on LSD in 1990 – flat, deadpan, going nowhere – is funny because we know we derange our senses with drugs in order to enjoy the mindless narcissistic parties that civilisation now frankly offers.

CB Yes, Matthew, and art – with its icy distances, millions of dollars and success-seeking players – is now accepted to be one of these parties.●

Next month: classical art, why did we ever pretend to like it? Pliny, the Ancient Roman, tells it how it is

The background image is a photograph of an art installation by Adrian Ghenie. It depicts a room with a mannequin in a dark, military-style uniform standing in the upper left. The walls are covered in various artworks, including a large, abstract painting with vibrant colors and a smaller, framed picture. In the foreground, there are two armchairs, one red and one dark, and a large, abstract sculpture made of cardboard boxes. The overall atmosphere is one of a contemporary art gallery.

ADRIAN GHENIE

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THE MAP IS NOT THE TERRITORY

There's more to Middle Eastern and North African cinema than the nationality of its creators



this page: Shadi Abdel Salam, *The Mummy/Night of Counting the Years*, 1973

facing page, from top: Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige, *I Want to See*, 2008; Elia Suleiman, *The Time That Remains*, 2009; Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige, *Ashes*, 2005; Maha Maamoun, *Domestic Tourism II*, 2009

ARTISTS FROM THE MIDDLE EAST HAVE been known to observe that, contrary to the experience of their colleagues in Europe and America, their work is seen to be Middle Eastern first, and art second. The same might be said of experimental and art-house film from this region. The contemporary Arab avant-garde is seldom considered in terms of its experimental cinema of the 1960s, 70s and 80s – itself a largely abandoned patrimony. While connections are drawn between Arab art-house film and Italian neorealism, French new wave and Soviet cinema, links between Arab filmmakers and developments in, say, Brazil or India go uncharted. “For too long we’ve left the history of these decades to political scientists, anthropologists and sociologists”, says Rasha Salti. “Cultural historians and critics have not written

the 60s, 70s and 80s.”

Salti is a Beirut-based curator and stalwart of ArteEast, the New York arts nonprofit specialising in cultural production in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region. For three years she has collaborated with Jytte Jensen, film curator at New York’s Museum of Modern Art, on an ambitious project that aims at recovering and restoring, collating and projecting a slice of Arab avant-garde cinema. Their labour has borne fruit with *Mapping Subjectivity: Experimentation in Arab Cinema from the 1960s to Now*, a series of three month-long film programmes that assembles cutting-edge film and video from the MENA region.

The first instalment premiered at MoMA in October 2010 and will screen in its entirety at London’s Tate Modern in March. Comprising 26 short and feature-length fiction and documentary films, the programme spans the period of 1970 to 2009 and the region from Morocco to Iraq. The curators’ aim is to highlight “intangible connections and conversations among selected works”, so the films are clustered to reflect thematic and aesthetic commonalities rather than historical or geographical proximity. “It’s not somebody saying: ‘This is how I see the political and social situation’”, says Jensen. “It’s artists working within film and expressing a subjective point of view. That’s what’s interesting for us. We wanted to do something that takes its departure from the language of film.”

The recent work includes films that have seen limited cinematic release and others seldom screened outside the festival circuit. Four works will be projected by Palestine’s Elia Suleiman, the best-known Arab art-house filmmaker, including his trilogy of feature films *Chronicle of a Disappearance* (1996), *Divine Intervention* (2002) and *The Time That Remains* (2009).

Critically acclaimed Lebanese artists Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige also have several works here, among them *I Want to See* (2008), which features Catherine Deneuve and Rabih Mroué as two actors driving from Beirut to the Israeli border in the wake of the month-long 2006 war between Israel and Lebanon. Another, *The Lost Film* (2003), appears to be a documentary about Hadjithomas and Joreige’s efforts to track down a missing print of their first feature film in Yemen, but allows for a wider rumination upon aspects of the film image in the Middle East, in a film that is clearly embedded in their gallery-centred artistic practice.

Most of the restored films are unknown to European and American audiences. Best-known is *The Mummy/Night of Counting the Years*



(1973), by Egypt's Shadi Abdel Salam, which was restored in 2010 by the World Cinema Foundation and Cineteca di Bologna. Among the remarkable works Salti and Jansen unearthed is *The Man Who Was Looking at the Windows* (1986), by Algeria's Merzak Allouache. This tale of a quiet library employee whose mounting desperation leads him to rise up against his boss stands in for that of a society living under despotic rule. "An exquisite, riveting film", says Salti, "and it's made more powerful when you recall how Algeria was under [then-president] Boumediene at that time. It is quite unlike Allouache's other work. And an increasingly bad copy of the film [...] was seen by generations of Algerians." Influences on Algeria from outside the region are also being investigated by the curators: "One work from Algeria from the 1960s [...] made me think these filmmakers must have been aware of Brazilian *cinema novo*", Jensen recalls. "Asking: 'What did the filmmakers see? Did the *cinema novo* people watch these films? Did they study together?' I think this will make an interesting conversation."

The season also includes a newly restored copy of *Summer 70* (1972), a collaboration between Egyptian Naji Shaker and Italian Paolo Isaja – both film students in Rome, neither of whom could fund the graduation film they had in mind. "*Summer 70* hasn't screened anywhere", Sati says. "It is paradigmatically experimental, so unless you're familiar with the experimental canon, it may baffle you. It's the only film that Shaker made before leaving cinema to become a puppeteer."

The second part of *Mapping Subjectivity* is scheduled for projection at MoMA in October and November this year. Jensen says that although the films will be different, the approach will be much the same as in the first edition. "We're hoping to have

words **JIM QUILTY**



more of the restored older films", she says. "We're thinking of having more new work that crosses the line into art – gallery-based work, installations and so forth – because that's how a lot of the younger artists work nowadays."

Mapping Subjectivity: Experimentation in Arab Cinema is at Tate Modern, London, from 4 to 27 March and MoMA, New York, in the autumn

EASTERN PROMISE

Between Victor Pinchuk's many projects, the ambitions of ART-KYIV and a Ukrainian biennial planned for next year, Kiev is coming out as a contemporary art centre



Kiev, it may take a while to reach its goal. However, the fair's curated sections, including Ukrainian and international street and video art, provided a much-needed counterbalance to the commercial section and gave an indication of the specific direction ART-KYIV will be taking. In the meantime, the Arsenal will be hosting the Ukraine Biennale, bearing the happy subtitle *Anti-Armageddon*, in 2012, and has submitted a bid to host the 2014 edition of Manifesta.

Yet the Arsenal's most ambitious scheme is the launching of a new museum, featuring both contemporary art and exhibits from the country's past. This is interesting news, as businessman and collector Victor Pinchuk is hatching his own plans for a private museum and, reportedly, had an interest in the same location the Arsenal is pursuing. For the time being, Pinchuk's contemporary art centre, located in the heart of the capital, very successfully lures a mostly young crowd with a blend of local and global flavours. The PinchukArtCentre, established in 2006, is only one of Pinchuk's many philanthropic projects. It likes to think of itself as a double agent, importing

THE CITIZENS OF Kiev have recently been subjected to a massive education scheme by two key players in the field of contemporary art: the private initiative PinchukArtCentre and the state-run Mystetskyj Arsenal Cultural-Art and Museum Complex. And the art in question is of course not socialist realism, but reflects expensive market brands (in the former venue) and, presumably, somewhat more international-biennial-compatible names (in the latter).

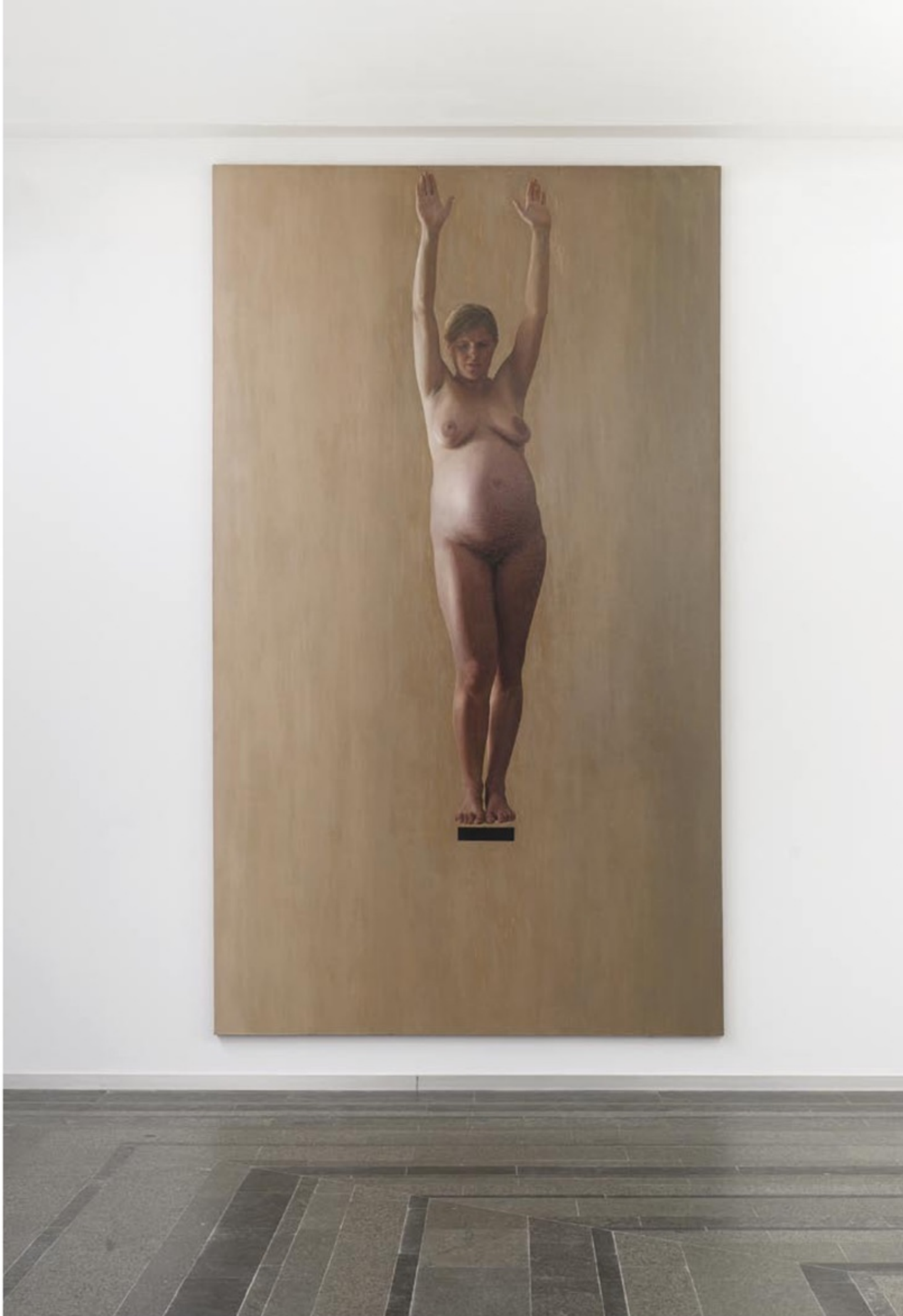
Nataliia Zabolotna, the Arsenal's general director, is eager to turn the impressive historic complex into a buzzing art hub. In early November, the Arsenal saw the fifth edition of ART-KYIV Contemporary, the enduringly Ukrainian- and Russian-dominated art fair of which Zabolotna is also the director. With massive tax and customs burdens removed, the fair is supposed to attract more international exhibitors – indeed, Zabolotna states that Frieze Art Fair and Art Basel are her models. Given the quality of the works on offer in

international art glitterati such as Jeff Koons, Damien Hirst and Takashi Murakami, while at the same time supporting the country's art scene. To this end, the centre hosts a biennial national art award, the winner of which receives not only cash but also a short-term apprenticeship in the studio of a renowned international artist. Edification ranks top of the list – all exhibitions come with an educational programme – which makes it perhaps unfortunate that Pinchuk, or Eckhard Schneider, director of the centre, or both seem to share the tastes of the mainstream artworld.

The centre's most recent coup is the establishment of the Future Generation Art Prize. Promoted as the first truly global prize for contemporary art – although there is, for instance, the Artes Mundi Prize – it offers \$100,000 to the winner (\$40,000 to be used for production, but a still rather gratifying \$60,000 paid out in cash). Altogether, 21 artists were shortlisted, with all but one selected by an international committee

this page: Main hall of ART-KYIV Contemporary 2010. Photo: Maksim Belousov

facing page, from top: Artem Volokytin, *Monument 8*, 2010, oil on canvas, photo: Sergei Illin, © the artist, courtesy PinchukArtCentre, Kiev; Simon Fujiwara, *Welcome to the Hotel Munber*, 2010, site-specific installation, mixed media, photo: Sergei Illin, © the artist, courtesy PinchukArtCentre, Kiev



(the winner of the national PinchukArtCentre Prize automatically joins the global contest). It's no surprise that the competitors reflect a pretty accurate picture of the international artworld (many of the artists originating from Europe, several the recent recipients of other awards and few totally unknown). In keeping with that, the prize's winner, Cinthia Marcelle, is Brazilian (South America being a region in particular favour in the artworld right now) and the Special Prize went to Nicolae Mircea of Romania (ditto Eastern Europe).

Ziad Antar's work, a portrayal of Lebanon's potato industry, is one of the more intriguing contributions, as is Simon Fujiwara's restaged installation *Welcome to the Hotel Munber* (2008–ongoing), a research project into the life of his family under Spanish dictator Franco and a comment on (homo)sexual oppression at the time. Marcelle's mesmerising videos of pointless and repetitive actions, involving fire engines or earthmovers, sits somewhere between absurd theatre performances and dark-humoured comments on land art. Amid mainly installation, site-specific or

words **ASTRID MANIA**



video work, Ukrainian contestant Artem Volokytin was the only painter, contributing almost clinical images of nude bodies – a somewhat unfortunate choice given that the art fair had already provided plenty of flesh (albeit in lesser quality).

Given the abundance of money and drive, there is little doubt that the Arsenal and the PinchukArtCentre will manage to catapult Kiev onto the map of international contemporary art. Maybe the biennial and other activities planned at the Arsenal will manage to provide a counterbalance to the very safe, market-oriented approach at the PinchukArtCentre. Yet there is still plenty of space for independent, challenging and experimental art initiatives to position themselves somewhere between the biennial and the market approach. Let's hope for plenty of naughty students.

The Future Generation Art Prize group exhibition is on show at the PinchukArtCentre, Kiev, until 9 January

KUNST



MACHT

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MEDITATIONS ON ART HATE SERIES

No 1. The Proximity of Buchenwald to Weimar, and Picasso to Burger King

By Neal Brown

The city of Weimar was the focus of the German Enlightenment and is where the writers Goethe and Schiller developed the literary movement now known as Weimar Classicism. The city was also the birthplace of the Bauhaus movement, founded by Walter Gropius. The artists Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Oskar Schlemmer, and Lyonel Feininger all taught in Weimar's Bauhaus School. Weimar has thus been, historically, a renowned centre of the highest of high culture. In 1937, the Nazis constructed the Buchenwald concentration camp, only five miles, point to point, from Weimar's city center. Between 1938 and 1945, the Nazis imprisoned some 240,000 people in Buchenwald. Although not an extermination camp like Auschwitz-Birkenau or Treblinka, at least 56,000 Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals, political prisoners and prisoners-of-war were starved, tortured or worked to death as slaves in the camp.

In early 1938 a metal sign stating *Jedem das Seine* was placed over Buchenwald's main entrance gate. It literally means 'to each his own', but figuratively 'everyone gets what he deserves.' It was designed by Franz Ehrlich, a former master pupil at the Dessau Bauhaus, and a Buchenwald inmate. Ehrlich, who had studied with Moholy-Nagy, Klee, Kandinsky and Josef Albers, designed the letters in the manner of his teacher, Joost Schmidt, and the Bauhaus masters. The camp commander ordered it to be installed in the camp gate so as to be readable from the inside. *Jedem das Seine* was a typical propaganda phrase of the time. The saying is two thousand years old and its origins can be traced back to Roman times. The Nazi SS interpreted 'to each his own' as legitimising a perceived right to humiliate and destroy others. It is similar to *Arbeit macht frei*, the slogan placed above the entrances at other Nazi concentration camps, including Auschwitz, Dachau, Gross-Rosen, Sachsenhausen and the Theresienstadt. In German, *Arbeit macht frei* means 'work brings freedom.'

The phrase *Jedem das Seine* is still used commonly as a proverb in German-speaking countries. Several modern advertising campaigns in the German language, including advertisements for Nokia, REWE grocery stores, Burger King, and Merkur Bank have caused controversy after using the phrase *Jedem das Seine* or *Jedem den Seinen*. An ExxonMobil campaign in 2009 (ExxonMobil is the brand owner of Esso, Exxon and Mobil), advertised Tchibo coffee drinks at the company's Esso stores with the slogan *Jedem den Seinen!* These advertisements were withdrawn after protest, and Esso said its advertisers had been unaware of the association with Nazism. Tchibo – one of Germany's biggest chains – said the 'unfortunate' slogan would be removed from 700 petrol stations and that the company had 'never intended to hurt feelings'. Esso said the advertising company that devised the campaign were ignorant of the phrase's historical significance.

In 2010 an art exhibition entitled *Art Hate* was presented at Galleria Art Hate London, England, comprising work by a number of artists, including Billy Childish, Jimmy Cauty, Neal Brown, Harry Adams, Jamie Reid and Charlotte G. Young. A central work was a metal sign that made reference to the Auschwitz version of *Arbeit macht frei*. A spokesperson for the artists said that they used it in full knowledge of its historical significance, and that they 'appropriated its use as a pristine example of dishonest sloganeering, without intending any kind of disrespect to those who had perished or suffered as a consequence of Nazi atrocities.' The spokesperson said that the artists 'did not seek to attempt to understand everything about other's pain – that it is not possible to do so.' The spokesperson went on to say that 'it is the artists' intention to use humankind's most absolutist examples of human cruelty as a reference point from which to extrapolate other meanings which, by definition, must be lesser ones. One of

the meanings they wish to explore is the feeling, or emotion, of hatred. Art Hate's silence on genocidal suffering, with regard to *Arbeit macht frei*, is a form of respect.'

The Art Hate spokesperson said that the artists were 'interested in the literal and metaphorical proximity of Buchenwald to Weimar, and the implications of this for understanding the many expressions of hatred relative to the practice of art, and the relationship of this with institutional power.' The spokesperson added that, 'These artists are interested in the historical context of hatred, such as the relationship of art (especially modernism) with fascism, the history of advertising and the history of propaganda, and how these are governed by the interplay of social, commercial and political directiveness, resulting in deception and confusion. Art Hate artists are interested in the complicit relationships people and institutions may have with forms of hatred, and the abuse of language, and the near universality of hatred (and its various related sub-categories such as anger, stigmatised exclusion, triumphalist revenge, jealousy, etc), in the making and presentation of art. Certain conclusions may be drawn from this in respect of contemporary art.'

The spokesperson said that the artists practice 'an extreme sincerity of purpose, using the presentational devices of wild play, and about which they are fearlessly unashamed.' The artists were quoted as comparing their work with Picasso's *Guernica*, and saying that 'in our opinion *Guernica* is a bad, stupid painting, which is so much more about Picasso than about anyone else's suffering as to constitute an alienation. We wish to avoid such a psychology in our dealings with this very serious subject. We prefer the approach taken by Francisco Goya in his *Disasters of War* series and their humorous texts, and we have enormous respect for Hans Haacke. But we do, of course, wish to follow our own path, not anyone else's.' They also described their fascination with the intimate relationship of art to weaponry, as seen in what they called 'the ornate murder weapons' in the Wallace Collection, as well as certain displays at the Imperial War Museum.

In 2010 a notable art critic discussed Art Hate in a private letter to one of the artists, Billy Childish. Publication of the text was allowed on condition that the critic's identity was not revealed, as an association with Art Hate could be misconstrued.

It seems to me that you allow yourselves a heartening idealism in respect of ideals of truth in art. Your sincerity is commendable. The misunderstanding and obstacles you have, and will, encounter are a proof of the significance of what you are trying to achieve, although in due course your efforts will surely be acknowledged. In the context of increasingly desperate debates about the value of art, and 'regeneration through culture', it seems to be lost that essential prerequisites for artistic value are qualities like valor and nobility of spiritual purpose. The epitome of spiritual purpose – and the opposite of hate – is, of course, love, which seems to be a quality you have in abundance, and indicates a bright hope for the future. I thank you. [citation needed]

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Erwin Wurm can make
 a madcap sculpture in a minute, but
 it takes longer to appreciate that
 beneath his slapstick world – where
 you'll find yourself blinded by giant
 police helmets or confronted with
 grotesquely corpulent cars and
 people spitting in
 soup – lies a serious
 critique of society.
 As he says, 'It's
 always the best
 when it's hurting
 and it's cynical and
 it's not nice'.

WORDS: MARK RAPPOLT
 PORTRAIT: JAAP SCHEEREN

THE BACK WALL OF ERWIN WURM'S living room at the Schloss Limberg (think château, not castle) in Lower Austria is covered by one enormous colourful woollen jumper. It has a human-size neck and arm, but these look positively Lilliputian in comparison to the architectural scale of the knitwear's body. Although given that we are in Austria, perhaps the reference to Swift is a little out of place; it's tempting to say instead that this monstrous knitted surface renders the neck anal by virtue of its relative size, and defer to Dr Freud from there. Indeed, the temptation is not as circumstantial as that last sentence may have led you to believe. You enter Wurm's bathroom through a door at the jumper's centre.

Perhaps, though, the real point is this: one characteristic of Wurm's work is the extent to which it renders the banal – in this case a jumper, but in other works everything from buttered bread and unbuttered potatoes to deckchairs, crockery and traditional family houses – by turns horrible, monstrous, menacing and sinister. And then moderates that shock, but amplifies the effect, via an ironic veneer of comedy. This, for example, is an absurdly big sweater. "I think to be cynical – to make a joke about something – gives me more strength and more ability to be rude or to be nasty and not talk in that German way of pathos where you speak about death and everybody cries", says Wurm, with disarming directness. The idea, then, is that the jest sustains the victim so that he can be hurt some more. "The joke is subversive", Wurm continues. "I call it cynical criticism because you can tell someone the truth by making a joke; he's laughing, but it's still the truth and it hurts. Sometimes it's not good, but it's always the best when it's hurting and it's cynical and it's not nice. I don't like to make it nice."

As he says this, I'm thinking about *Adorno Was Wrong With His Ideas About Art* (2005), a work that attacks the influential Frankfurt School philosopher's exclusion of humour from art in favour of seriousness, and the adoption of this stance by a previous generation of artists – 'Germans especially', Wurm once said – during the 1960s and 70s, by inviting volunteers to lean, sit or lie against a number of wooden boards 'and think about Adorno' or 'listen to the board and fart'. There is, in case you hadn't guessed, a certain slapstick quality to Wurm's work as well.



"It was important to do something against the environment in which I lived. My father was a policeman and he thought that art always had one leg in the criminal. For my parents and for my teachers, this was the worst"

"I'm from this generation that grew up in the 1950s, where we read Disney comics, Donald Duck", explains Wurm, who was born in 1954. "He [Donald Duck] was our hero – we didn't read it just for the humour. So this was a very important influence on my work. At the time it was forbidden to read comic strips in school and it was subversive and for that reason it was doubly interesting. Even certain literature – Thomas Bernhard or even Samuel Beckett – was subversive at the time because those writers weren't rated by the schoolteachers." And before I can ask it, he answers my next question. "It was important to do something against the environment in which I lived. Plus, my father was a policeman and he thought that art always had one leg in the criminal. For my parents and for my teachers, this was the worst."

There's little doubt that Wurm is an artist who, in a fundamental way, relies on the rejection of the status quo and other social norms to generate his work. Indeed, as much as he appears to oppose them, he also depends on them. In the extreme, Wurm is something of a *Nestbeschmutzer* (one who shits in his own nest), as Bernhard too was often tagged by his critics. 'This tiny state is a gigantic dunghill', the Austrian writer wrote in his final play, *Heldenplatz* (1988): as with Wurm, his repulsion hid an attraction; however excremental he might have found it, Bernhard didn't quit Austria. Coincidentally, it was in response to an invitation to create a public sculpture for Vienna's Heldenplatz ('Hero's Square') that Wurm originally developed his series of giant police hats – sculptures that symbolise protection, both official and, in Wurm's case, paternal (the sculptures are like giant umbrellas and are completed when the viewer stands underneath them) and the arbitrary nature of authority (anyone under the hat





is a policeman). Indeed, if you are of sufficient height, you are also blinded. While Wurm now shows the hats in gallery exhibitions, the sculpture for Heldenplatz – where Hitler delivered an infamous speech announcing the *Anschluss* in 1938 before beginning a triumphal tour of Austria – was rejected.

Not content with expressing his feelings about what his father represents, Wurm (who, to be fair, does try to mitigate an overly patricentric reading by pointing out that his father, as a detective, never actually wore a police uniform) has developed a similarly antiauthoritarian approach to tackling the institutions and conventions of the artworld. In the *Be Nice to Your Curator* series of photographs from 2006, the artist is pictured carrying a limp-looking Edelbert Köb (then director of Vienna's MUMOK, where Wurm was having a retrospective) around the museum as if he were either a cripple or a big baby, or stuffing a large slice of chocolate cake into the mouth of the German curator Harald Kunde (who wrote a text in the catalogue that accompanied the MUMOK show). The works are both creepy and bizarre, but perhaps most clearly display Wurm's fundamental dialectic of rejection and dependency.

But to return to the issue of banality, there's no doubt that the humble pullover has played an important part in Wurm's artistic output. In his video *13 Pullovers* (1991), fellow Austrian artist Fabio Zolly pulls on – with increasing difficulty – the required number of the garments, transforming himself from an average-size guy (slight middle-aged paunch, but nothing too extreme) into something approximating the Michelin Man. In another video, *59 Positions* (1992), Wurm dons a variety of pullovers and contorts himself into absurd positions – which have since become the basis



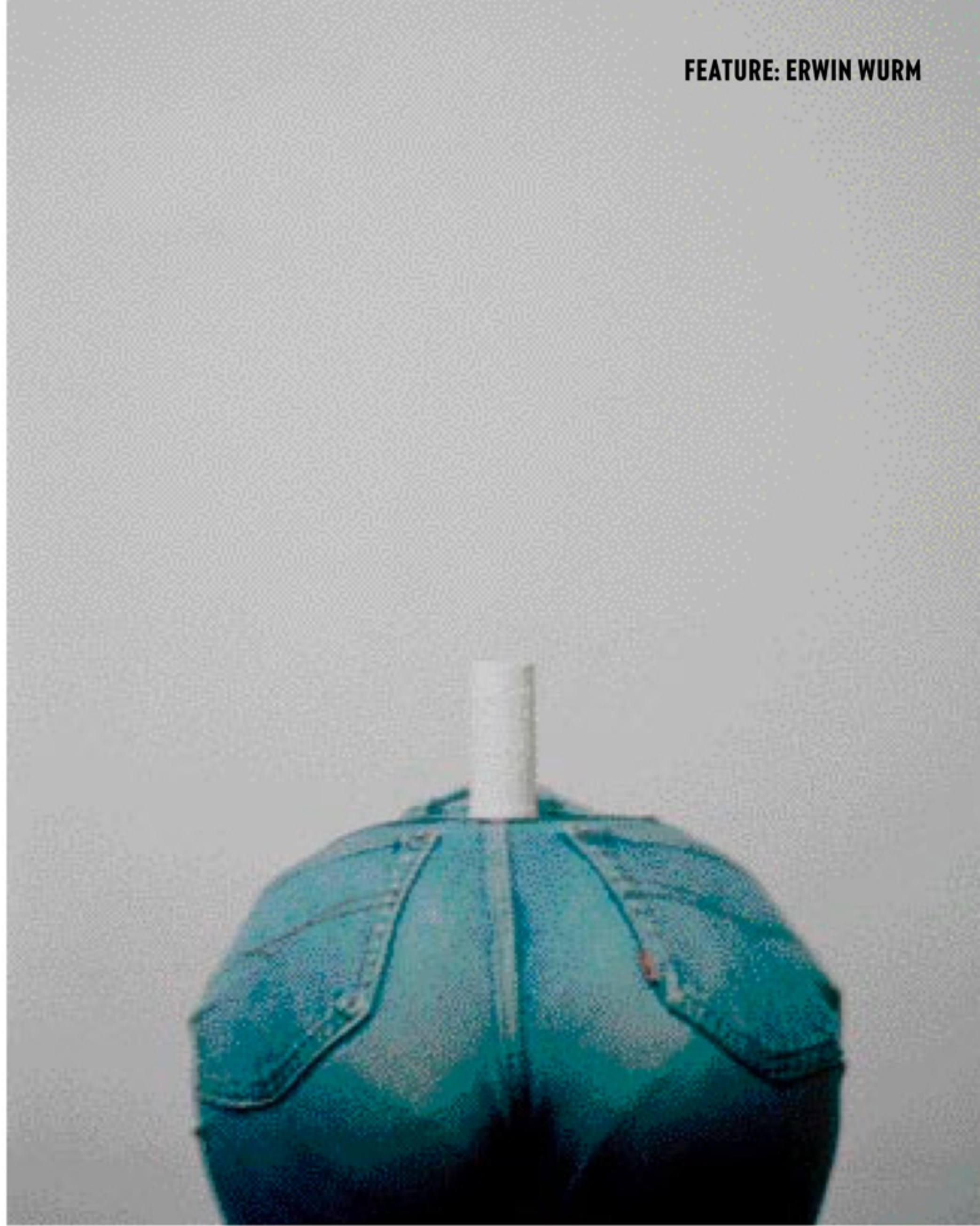
for a series of three-dimensional sculptures, some recently exhibited at Lehmann Maupin Gallery in New York – so that they cover him entirely. It's hard to tell whether he's consuming them (stretching them to destruction) or they're consuming him (swallowing his entire body). So what's with this fetish for sweaters, jumpers and pullovers in his work?

"It's the doubling of the skin – of the surface", Wurm replies. "When we wear clothes, they take on the shape of the body and show the person underneath. This piece itself is just the surface. Which brings me back to the very old sculptures of the Renaissance, or Ancient Greece: those bronze casts where the sculptures consist of a very thin layer of bronze and the real piece is missing inside – it's just the surface."

As he says this, however, I'm not thinking of Renaissance bronzes; I'm thinking of the infamous B-movie director Ed Wood and his fetish for angora sweaters. Not just because Wurm, throughout an artistic career that has spanned almost three decades, clearly takes on a subject and material and exploits it until it or he is exhausted. But also in the way that he uses the pullover as a transformative material, something Wood memorably (OK, to some) did in his film *Glen or Glenda* (1953), in which a love of knitwear becomes a cipher for transvestism. 'What am I...' the film's promotional material reads, 'Male or Female!' While transvestism is a transformation Wurm has yet to tackle, there's no doubt that the idea of fluid change also runs through his work, from trucks bent at right angles and sculpted boats that flop like fish to sculptures of architectural masterpieces melting and self-portraits of the artist as a gherkin (literally gherkins displayed on plinths).

That's not to say that there isn't a large amount of B-movie material in Wurm's work: *UFO* (2006), for example, an ordinary saloon car melting into a flying saucer-like body, or *House Attack* (2006), in which an archetypal domestic house appears to have crashed, roof first, like some meteorite, into the monolithic grey bunker that is MUMOK, or *Telekinetically Bent VW Van* (2006), the classic bus bent, by Yogi Mahesh Abayahani, through telekinesis (at Wurm's invitation, if the email pasted to the bus's window is to be believed) into a curve. But just as I'm getting into my theme, Wurm continues with his. "I use the notion of sculpture and put it all over my work", he says, waking me from my sci-fi reverie.

He's right, of course. His art has consistently toyed with the idea of what a sculpture might be, from the famous *One Minute Sculptures* that he began during the 1980s – in which Wurm, or someone following his instructions, engages his body in a generally absurd relationship with objects or their environments (plugs his nostrils with marker pens or puts himself headfirst into a trashcan, for example) and holds the pose for a minute or the time it takes to capture the scene photographically – to his sweaters, cars, videoworks, instructional drawings, portraits of the artist as a useless human being and bananas stuffed into plug sockets. Indeed, such is Wurm's inability to leave the subject alone that even his catalogues are not free from the drive to sculpt. *Gurke* (2009) has an embossed gherkin emerging from its front cover, while *The Artist Who Swallowed the World* (2006) features the kind of swollen, padded, wipe-clean cover that would normally indicate literature for infants or self-harmers.



Given that we're in Austria, you'll be far from shocked to hear that where there's a symptom, there's a trauma, and Wurm traces his own to his attempts to get into art school. When he first applied to study art, he intended to pursue a career in painting. He was not accepted, however, and was sent to the sculpture school instead. "I realised that now I had to build myself a base that was related to this issue", he recalls. "That became an investigation into what sculpture can mean today, and how I could respond to this – how I might make a connection between myself and the idea of sculpture. At that time I had absolutely no money, but I had to make work, so I used materials that other people threw away. And this brought me to the idea of using everyday materials, not only physical material but also issues and ideas. I often use the idea of sculpture as a catalyst: I ask the question 'What is sculpture?' Sculpture is to add volume, to take volume away, and you can also say that's when you gain or lose weight. This brought me to these fat pieces."

Among these last are an obese house and a series of similarly overweight motorcars. One incarnation of the fat house includes the video *Am I a House?* (2005), in which the edifice, asking, "Am I a house and an artwork/or am I just an artwork/but that would mean I am no house", seems to reflect on its existence. "Oh, that's so confusing", it continues. "And why am I fat?... Can anybody tell me what's this greenish big dog shit over there? Is this art? Or dog shit?" This sense of existential crisis is not just an internal symptom of the work itself, but something Wurm passes on to the viewer as well. His fat cars are a case in point. "They say that over time a master becomes more and more like his dog", he explains. "That's what I was thinking with the fat cars." What I'm thinking is that we drove to the *schloss* from Vienna in Wurm's

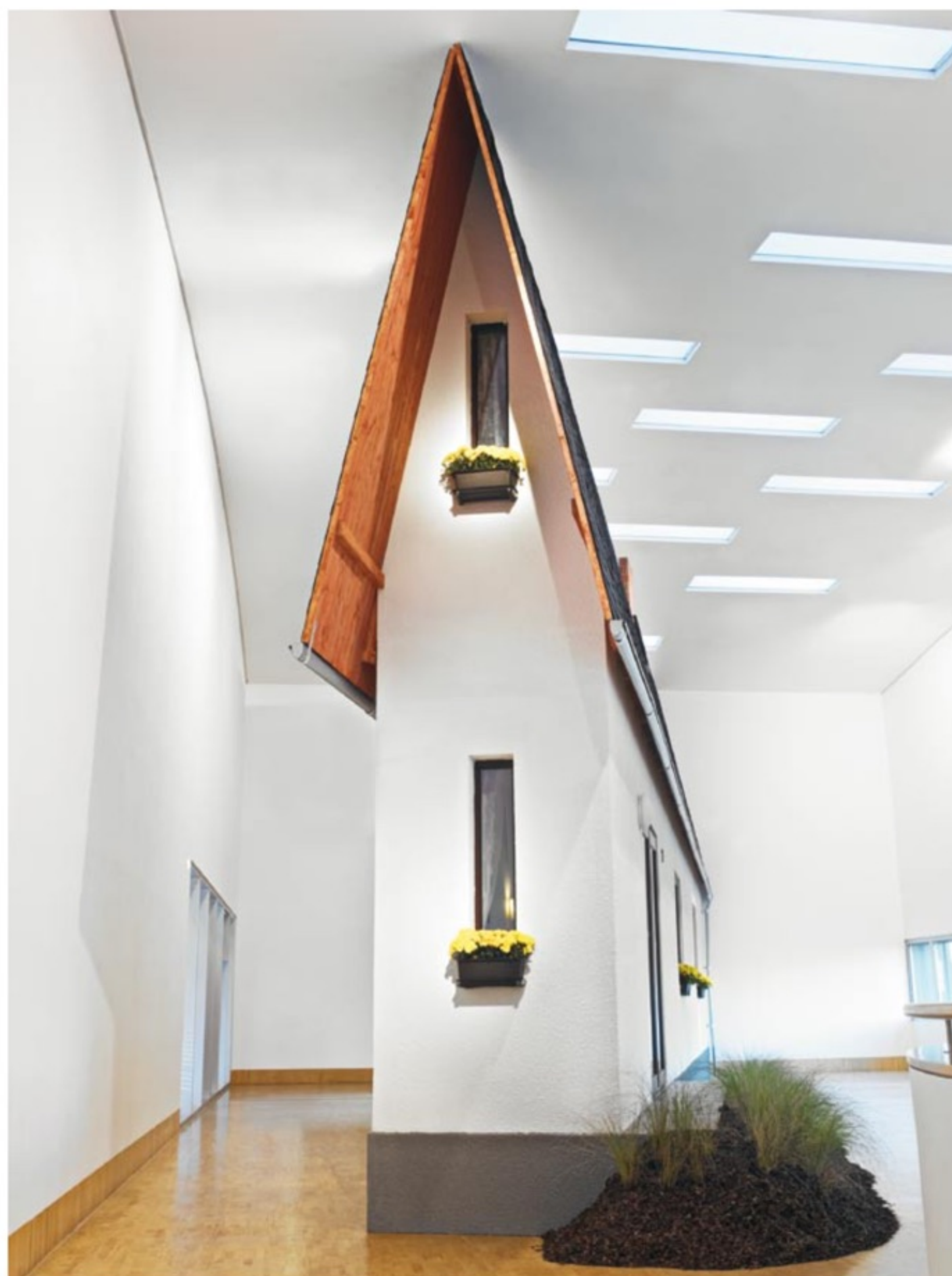


Porsche. He's tall and thin. It's sleek and fast. I'm not sure what to make of that. But enough about him. I drive a Mini. It's nearly six years old. I dread to think what that says about my future. I'm squirming a little on the inside. But I draw some comfort from the fact that my car's certainly not fat.

If one of Wurm's goals is to inspire other people to question their place within and relation to the world, then the means by which he places the viewer in this position have often been extremely direct. He writes instructions for actions or sculptures (in the 2003 work *Instructions on How to Be Politically Incorrect*, for example, these include spitting in someone's soup, peeing on someone's rug and 'fucking the Third World') performed by volunteers, curators or people who respond to advertisements. One consequence of this approach is that his works are imitated and copied – and then displayed, predominantly via the Internet. The *One Minute Sculptures*, for example, inspired the Red Hot Chili Peppers's video for *Can't Stop* (2002), in which the band performs its own versions of his work (and thanks him for the inspiration at the end). So I wonder if it's more important to him, given his professed interest in the everyday and in making the ordinary extraordinary, that his work be recognised in this way rather than through museum retrospectives (of which he's had a few). "Well, both are important", says Wurm. "I'm very much into art in public spaces. Not like the usual art in public spaces, or streets or houses or whatever, but the public space of magazines and newspapers or videos like this – I find it very, very interesting. I'm interested that my work finds interest. This would be enough for me, rather than making the work for 10 critics and 52 gallery visitors."

But given the extent to which Wurm's work relies on a degree of manipulation and control (ironically of the very kind – rules, instructions, prescriptions – that he claims to have rebelled against) in order to force the viewer into certain situations, I wonder whether or not he finds these bastard and viral versions of his oeuvre too random and ill-disciplined. Go ahead and Google: a lot of the time it's just students larking about. "Of course I try to control the work by speaking about it in a certain way", he replies. "But then you can also forget it, because as soon as it's out, there are so many different opinions about it. When I look at these Internet pages where people make these 'One Minute Sculptures' it's uncontrollable – a lot of rubbish and stupid things came out. If I had made the Red Hot Chili Peppers video, I would have made it differently. But when you give instructions, you never know what comes out. This is also interesting."

I feel more comfortable about evoking Swift after that. And of all the praise that the Anglo-Irish writer received for his great satire *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), perhaps the most poignant came in a letter from the poet John Gay. 'It is universally read', he wrote of the recently published book, 'from the cabinet council to the nursery'. In an age when most art tends to be directed at either the market or the theorist, Wurm's particular talent is to have allowed his a similarly Swiftian appeal. That this has, at times, led to his work being dismissed as simple slapstick buffoonery is something of which the artist, who until recently taught at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna, is very conscious. "When I speak with the students, I've realised that their studying art is not to do with changing society; it's just about becoming rich and important very, very quick. They want to be famous before they've even made their first show." What does Wurm want, then, I



wonder. Does he want to change society through his art? "No, I cannot change it. It's even stupid to think so", is the rapid response. But then with typical perversity he qualifies that rather depressing finale: "But I am a political person, I live in my time, and I think it's a very important right to criticise our time." :

Erwin Wurm: *Yes Biological is on view* at *Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac*, Paris, from 11 January to 12 February

WORKS
(IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

Police Cap (Austrian), 2010, mixed media. Photo: Mischa Nawrata.
Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Salzburg & Paris

59 Positions, 1992, DVD, 20 minutes, video stills. Courtesy the artist

Mentally Yellow (Apex of the Sun's Motion), 2008, canvas, wool, 200 x 350 cm.
Courtesy the artist

Psycho 7 (Blue), 2010, aluminium, paint, 120 x 39 x 107 cm. Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Salzburg & Paris

Fat House, 2010, mixed media, 540 x 1000 x 700 cm. Courtesy the artist

The Idiot I, 2003, chair by Roland Rainer, instruction drawing. Courtesy Cristina Guerra Contemporary Art, Lisbon

Fat Convertible, 2005, mixed media, 130 x 469 x 239 cm. Courtesy Xavier Hufkens, Brussels

One Minute Sculpture (31), 1997, c-print, 45 x 30 cm. Courtesy the artist

House Attack, 2006 (installation view, MUMOK, Vienna), mixed media, dimensions variable.
Courtesy the artist

Narrow House, 2010 (installation view, Essl Museum, Klosterneuburg), mixed media, 1600 x 700.
Photo: Mischa Nawrata. Courtesy the artist

all images © Studio Wurm



[Left] *Unknown Circulation* (Detail), 2010, Silver pigment on black paper, Size variable

[Right] *Bridge of Paradise* (Detail), 2009, Engraving on hardwood flooring, 5 x 9.5 ft

I Was There

Buhm Hong, **Jonggon Lee**

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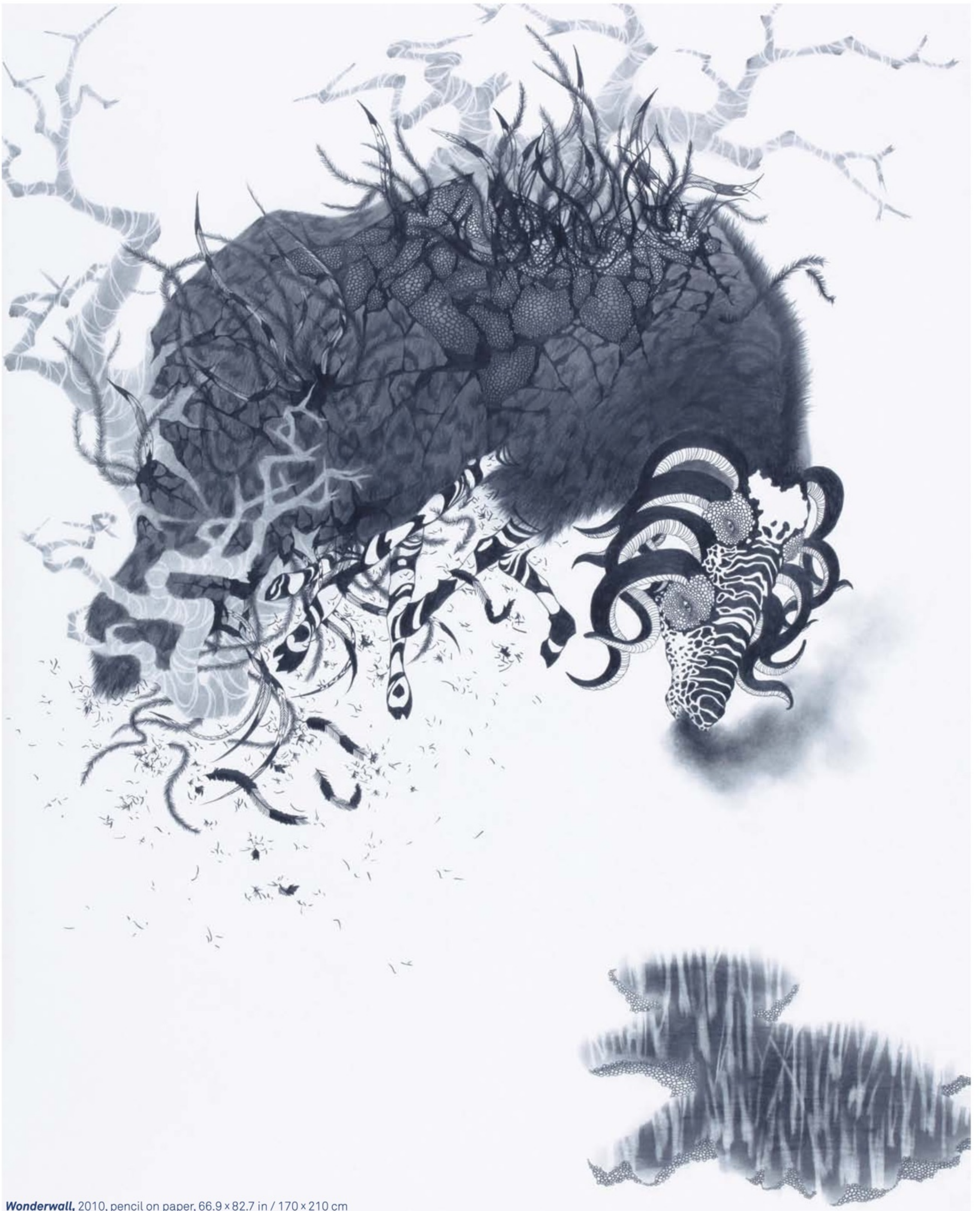
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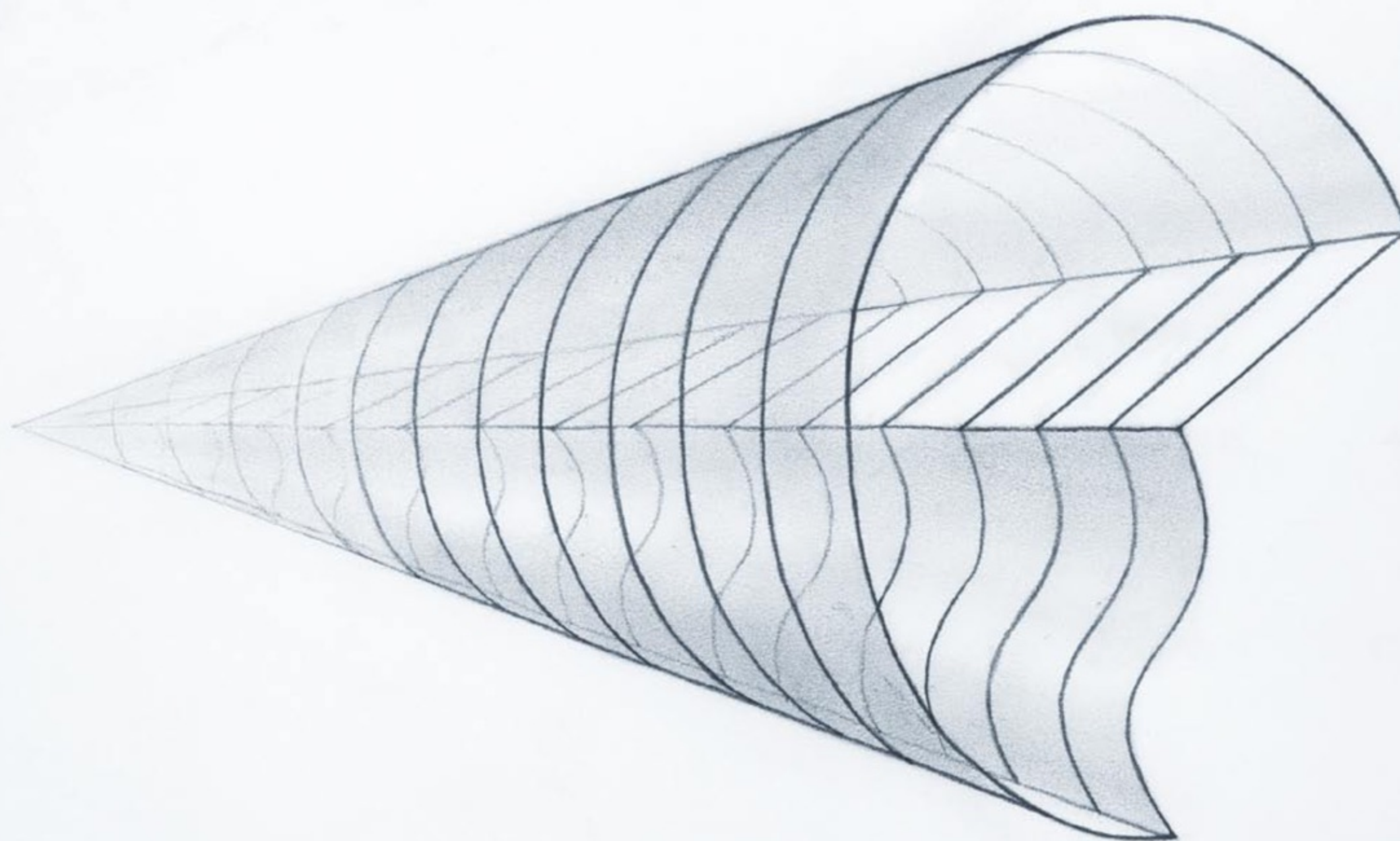
Wonderwall, 2010, pencil on paper, 66.9 x 82.7 in / 170 x 210 cm

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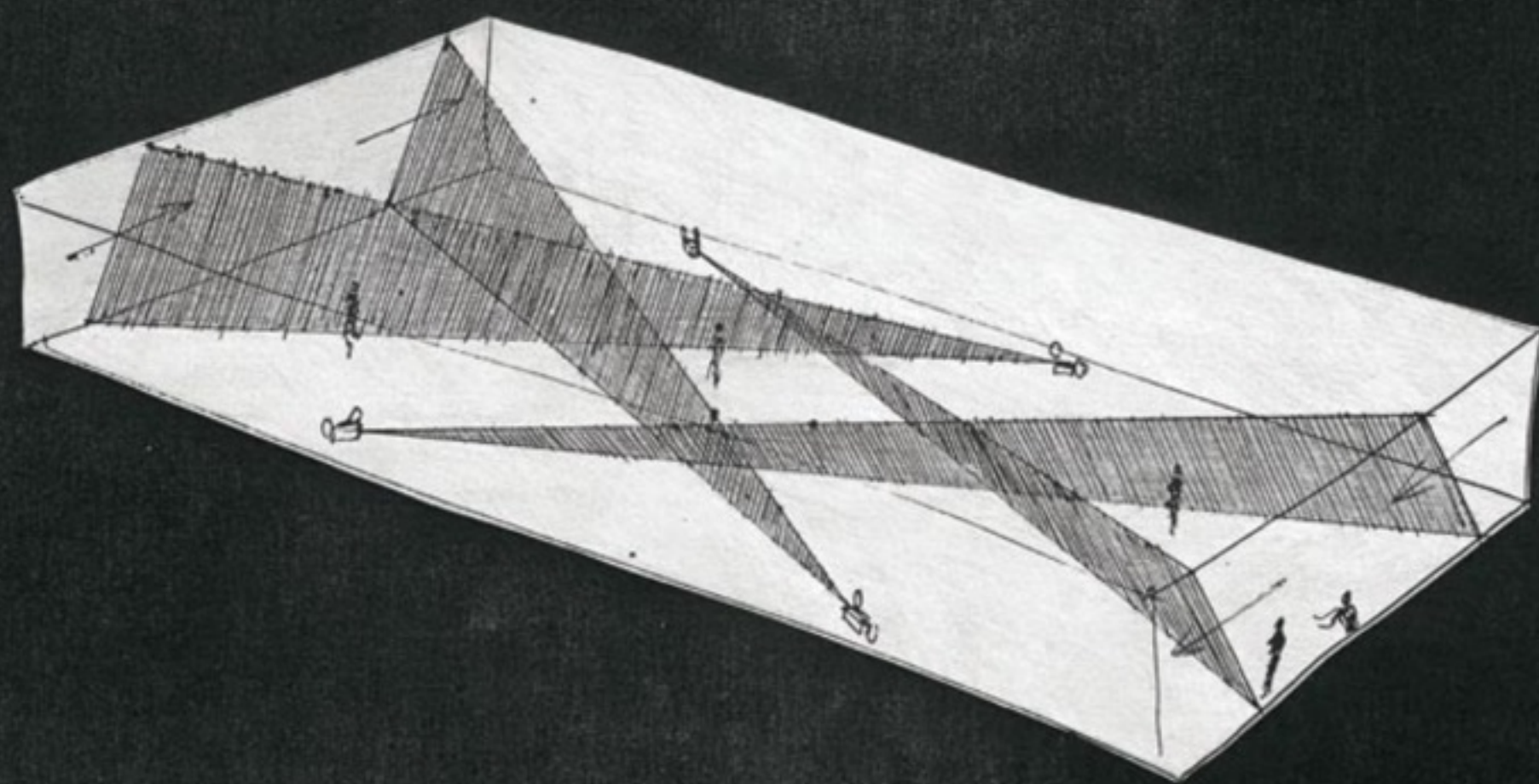
STUDY FOR "LEAVING" WITH TRAVELLING WAVE (XIII)

Am '07

Filmless projections, cones of light,
 spinning columns of air – when it comes
 to creating something out of nothing,
Anthony McCall has few peers.
 So how does a fetish for the insubstantial
 lead to a substantial body of work?

–

WORDS: TYLER COBURN

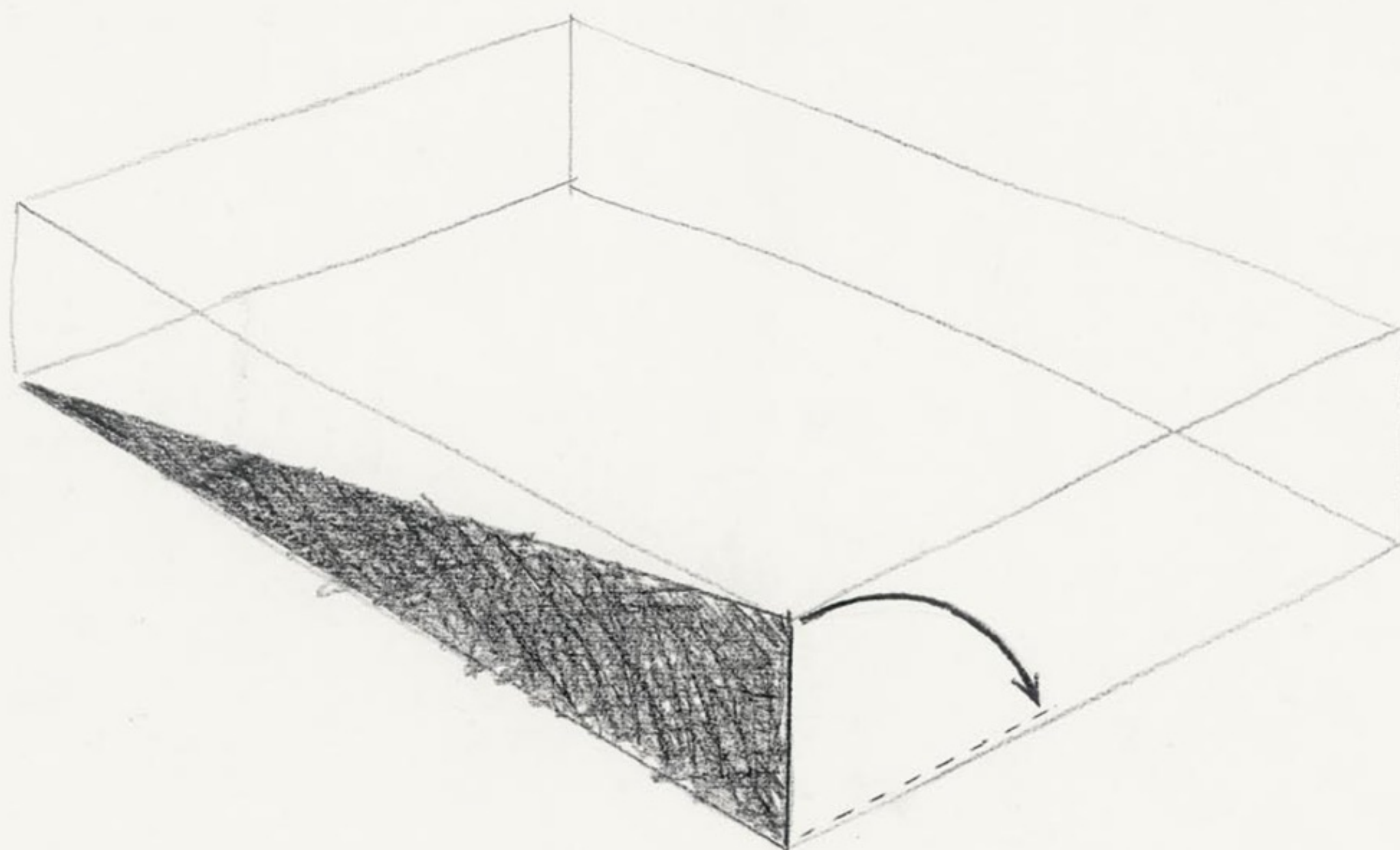


ONE OF THE RARE PLEASURES of the critical profession is meeting an artist as adept in the realm of language as in the realm of aesthetics – and then having the chance to interview him *twice*. At the conclusion of our 2008 interview, after outlining a decade's worth of projects (and enough proposals and ideas to fill a good several more), Anthony McCall remarked, "I'm having a hell of a good time and I know that one's not always on a roll. But I'm feeling very productive at the moment."

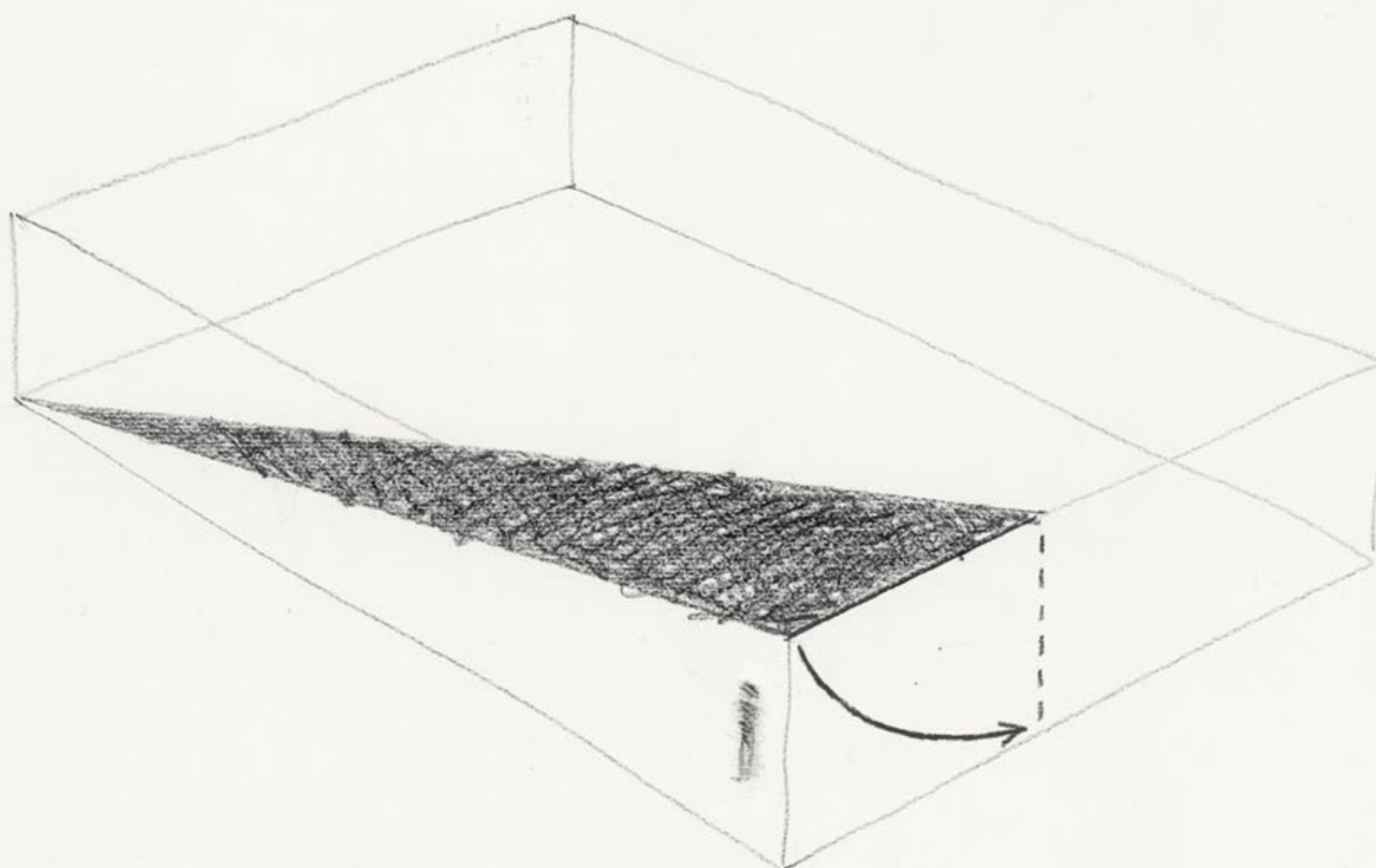
Fateful words. In the coming months, the New York-based Englishman will launch an ambitious exhibition at Sprüth Magers, London, and Ambika P3, a massive former concrete construction hall right in the heart of the English capital. Following his 2006 installation of the vertical digital projection *Between You and I*, at Peer at the Round Chapel, and his 2007 exhibition of horizontal projections at the Serpentine Gallery (both also in London), the two-tiered show will mark the most comprehensive presentation of McCall's vertical works in the UK.

This, alongside a number of forthcoming public projects, was reason enough to revisit McCall's studio in Tribeca, a neighbourhood whose present celebrity (and precipitous property values) owes, bittersweetly, to its previous life as a creative hotbed – a dank slice of lofts where McCall, from 1973 to 1975, realised the seven works that constitute his early 'solid light films'. Starting the series was *Line Describing a Cone* (1973), an animation of a white gouache dot that, over the course of 30 minutes, extended to form a circle. The film registered like a thesis for the following six, combining a long duration with a readily apprehensible structure to rouse the audience from conventional habits and shift focus to the site of projection; an expanded social sphere; and the conical articulation of projected light, in the space between apparatus and image (articulated, in large part, thanks to cigarette smoke and dust).

McCall's following films explored the permutations of his working elements, most exhaustively in *Long Film for Four Projectors* (1974), a six-hour protorave conducted by four projectors that each ran 16 segments of banded light at erratic speeds, with projectionists on hand to flip and rethread the reels in

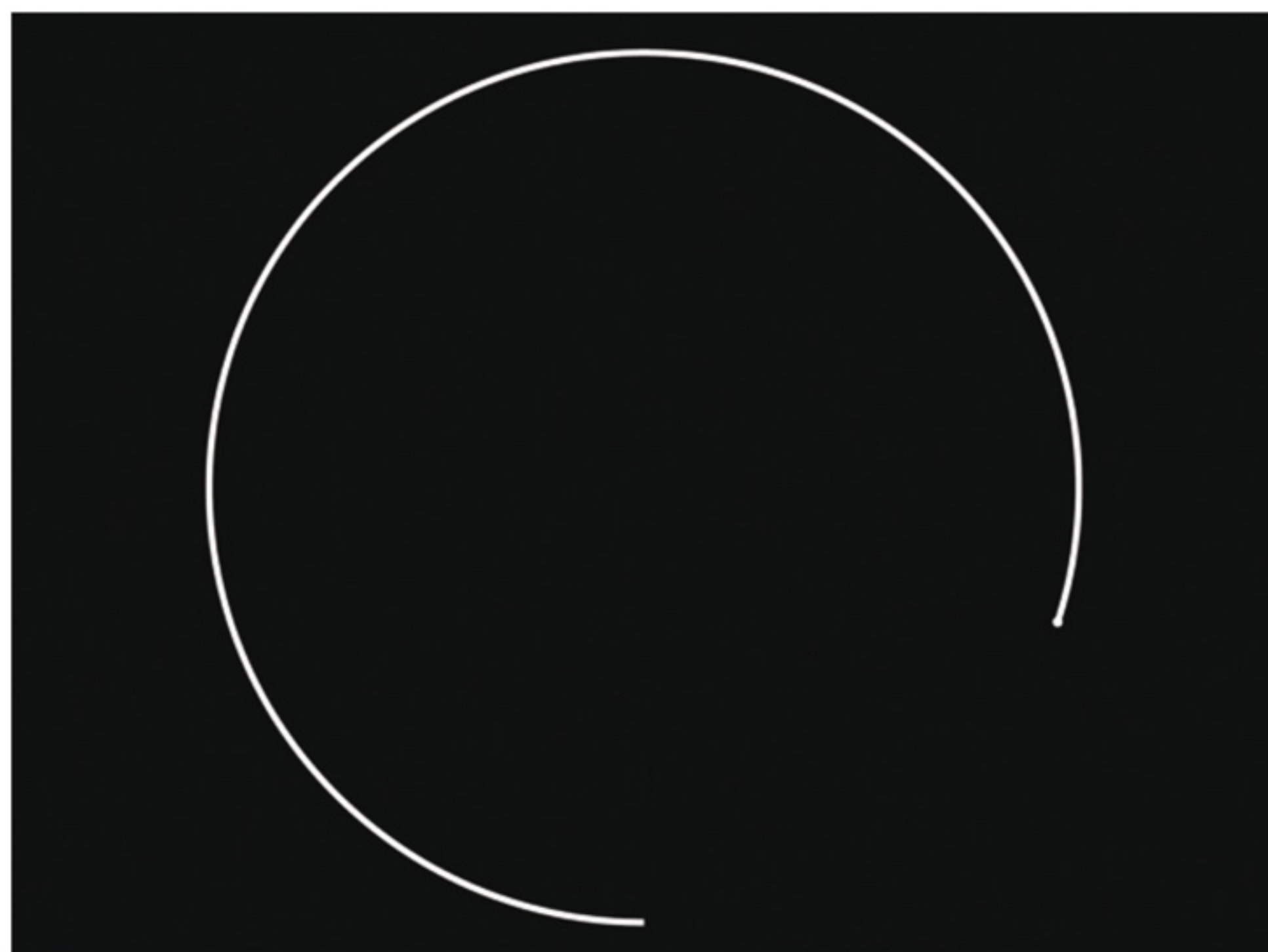


FOUR PROJECTED MOVEMENTS PART III REEL RUNS HEAD TO TAIL BACK TO FRONT
 DURATION 15 MINUTES ANTHONY MCCALL 1975



FOUR PROJECTED MOVEMENTS PART IV REEL RUNS TAIL TO HEAD BACK TO FRONT
 DURATION 15 MINUTES ANTHONY MCCALL 1975

*McCall managed
to make a film
that abandoned
the projector
and celluloid*



all possible variations. Over the arc of this series, as well as in his concurrent *Fire Cycles* (1973–4), lengthened time spans served, McCall says, to “outflank the ability of an audience to assemble”, reaching a culmination in *Long Film for Ambient Light* (1975), a 24-hour work that presented the transition of light, from day to night, between papered windows and a single bulb. ‘A piece of paper on the wall is as much a duration as the projection of a film’, McCall’s accompanying statement read. ‘Its only difference is in its immediate relationship to our perception.’

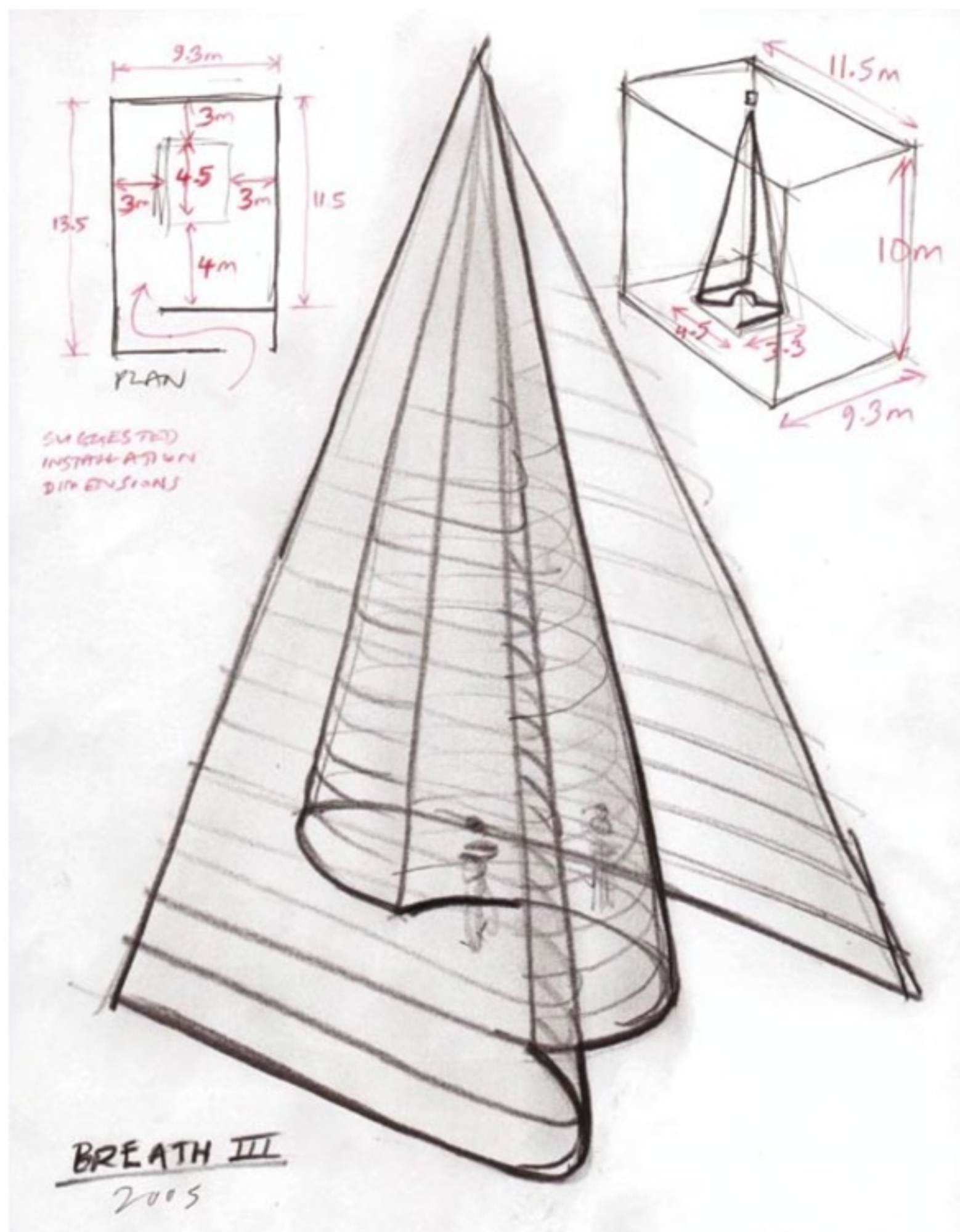
By the end of three short years, McCall had managed to make a film that abandoned projector and celluloid wholesale while also challenging entrenched notions of temporality that the Minimalists were contemporaneously questioning. “I did feel that I had completed something”, he reflects. “In a way, I had also put myself into a bit of a corner.” It seemed, as art historian Branden Joseph has discussed in his essay ‘Sparring with the Spectacle’ (2005), like a structuralist endgame – or a sizeable enough obstruction to reroute McCall’s thinking away from his ‘solid light films’ and along the emergent, Marxist-inflected lines of organisations like Artists Meeting for Cultural Change, in which McCall, Lucy Lippard, Carl Andre and other notables participated. Addressing colleagues such as Annette Michelson, Hollis Frampton and Peter Gidal on a panel at the 1976

International Forum on Avant-Garde Film in Edinburgh, where he also presented his solid-light work *Four Projected Movements* (1975), McCall worried that despite the avant-garde’s successful evasion of the ‘values of the consumer film industry’, the growing artworld validation of its artist-filmmakers (himself included) risked voiding their works of any potential for political significance. In a summation that could as easily apply to present times, McCall stated: ‘The Museums of Modern Art have become our Odeons Leicester Square’.

However rash and era-appropriate McCall’s disavowal seems, in hindsight it’s hard to deny the ground it cleared for later, critically incisive analyses of image culture, such as his film collaboration with Andrew Tyndall (*Argument*, 1978). What followed was a two-decade break from artmaking, as McCall pragmatically turned his attention to graphic design – though even then, straying not an inch from the artworld, as catalogues for galleries like Mary Boone, Hirschl & Adler and others attest.

The 2001–2 Whitney Museum exhibition *Into the Light: The Projected Image in American Art 1964–1977* provided the first continuous installation of *Line Describing a Cone* and contributed to a renewal of interest in McCall’s work. While the 1970s showings were intimate screenings for the avant-garde film community, McCall and Whitney curator Chrissie Iles made a significant departure by choosing to exhibit the work as a loop. Their reasoning, McCall remembers, drew on the quasi-narrative structure of the film (“It declared its purpose and, by the end, it has realised it”), but could also be seen to reflect the habituation of museums and galleries to film and video installation in the interim, since McCall’s early films. Additionally, as curator Olivier Michelon theorised in conversation with McCall, a mid-1990s trend of ‘purely sensuous art’, exemplified by the immersive, elemental installations of artists like Olafur Eliasson and Ann Veronica Janssens, has reframed the discussion of McCall’s recent work. Yet Michelon also correctly worries that this nascent vocabulary does not provide adequate allowance for the stakes set by *Line Describing a Cone*’s original, structuralist context. Originating as ‘a radical deconstruction of film’, Michelon notes, ‘in the 2000s, it appeared as an “environment”... apparently uncoupled from its own specific history’.

For his part, McCall is relatively untroubled by the museum setting, suggesting it offers another way to show work – and one that is still more conducive to interpersonal engagement. The ‘solid light films’ McCall resumed making in 2003, in point of fact,



*“When you’re focused,
your mind has
a murmur to it,
which is very much
like the sound
of the projector”*





are not only conceived primarily for exhibition, but foreground sculptural and phenomenological issues that arguably tie into this younger history of installation. “I still have a central interest in duration as an idea”, the artist remarks, “but whereas my films were connected to aesthetics in the 1970s, now they’re connected to mortality and the body”.

These recent works derive from complex formulae, developed in conjunction with mathematician Philip Ording, that the artist transforms into computer animations and digitally projects across horizontal and vertical expanses. Galleries and museums are buttoned-up affairs in comparison to dingy Tribeca lofts (to say nothing of the recent spate of smoking bans), so cigarettes are substituted with the streamlined emissions of haze machines, which sculpt McCall’s volumes of projected light as they shift between expanded and contracted states. And in lieu of the vintage 16mm whir, the digital projector facilitates a different category of noise. “When you’re focused, your mind has a murmur to it, which is very much like the sound of the projector”, McCall reflects. “It creates a cover for your concentration.”

McCall characterises his horizontal and vertical projections, respectively, as ‘recumbent’ and ‘standing figures’, extending a bodily analogy that, per Hal Foster, shares much with Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s theory of intersubjectivity. “Our whole experience of our corporeal selves is in relation to others”, McCall says. “So representation sort of got it wrong, because it thinks the body is an object, which it isn’t. It’s actually a channel of communication.” Particular titles, like *Coupling* (2009), remind us of the relational qualities of the artist’s silvery, figural projections, which in this case absorbs mathematics into two undulating, enveloping ellipses that disappear and reappear without warning, continually eroding and reframing the boundaries of their (and our) relationship.

As McCall’s ‘solid light films’ expand out onto increasingly dynamic, sculptural terrain, a separate body of work reveals an emerging interest in public – and particularly urban – sites. A handful of projects are in the works, including the Arts Council of England and Cultural Olympiad commission *Projected Column*, a vertical slice of spinning warm air that will rise over the city of Liverpool in time for the 2012 Olympics. Another commission, for the city of Auckland, titled *Light House*, is also scheduled to open in 2012. “It’s interesting how all cities have the same life cycle”, McCall reflects. “They have ex-industrial waterfronts and cultural rehabilitation and reuse. Auckland is no different.” The city has steadily removed disused storage tanks over the past several years, retaining a former cement silo that McCall will turn into a projector and “receiving chamber”. Visitors can enter from beneath a 130-foot-tall concrete cylinder, punctured by six vertical



cuts that, like apertures, will allow the sun to travel its interior from sunrise to sunset. McCall plans to retrofit the top of the silo with a lighthouse, slowing the pulse and tracking the light along a west-east path that faces the surrounding harbour. In an uncannily similar manner to *Long Film for Ambient Light*, *Light House* replaces the projector with daily cycles of natural and artificial light, yet grounds these processes on a site with both historical and poetical resonances, from the specific role of the cement silo to the fanciful addition of the lighthouse – one signal, among the many in McCall’s lexicon, that builds a channel of communication between a device and a screen, an artist and audience, and a group of people in conversation.●

Anthony McCall: *Vertical Works* is presented by Sprüth Magers Berlin & London at Ambika P3, University of Westminster, London, from 28 February to 27 March. Works on paper by Anthony McCall will also be on view at Sprüth Magers London from 28 February to 26 March

WORKS
(IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

Study for *Leaving*, 2006–7, the 19th minute, graphite on paper, one of four

Long Film for Four Projectors, 1974, installation drawing (1977), photocopy and pencil on paper, 20 x 25 cm

Long Film for Four Projectors, 1974 (installation view, 2003). Photo: Hank Graber

Four Projected Movements, 1975, installation drawing, wax pencil on paper, 46 x 61 cm

Four Projected Movements, 1975, installation drawing, wax pencil on paper, 46 x 61 cm

Line Describing a Cone, 1973, during the 24th minute (installation view, Musée de Rochechouart, 2007).
Photo: Freddy Le Saux

Line Describing a Cone, 1973, frame from the 24th minute

Breath III, 2004–5, installation drawing, pencil on paper

Vertical Works, 2009 (installation view, Hangar Bicocca, Milan). Photo: Giulio Buono

Long Film for Ambient Light, 1975 (installation view, Idea Warehouse, New York, 2pm, 18 June 1975)

Long Film for Ambient Light, 1975 (installation view, Neue Galerie, Aachen, 1976)

all works

Courtesy the artist and Sprüth Magers, Berlin & London

There's a Peter Pan syndrome at
 play in the artworld, with a
 number of male artists appearing,
 on the evidence of their work,
 drawn to the idea of inhabiting
 an eternal
 adolescence.
 Why don't they want
 to grow up?

WORDS: OLIVER BASCIANO

FOR A FORTHCOMING EXHIBITION, David Blandy has developed a computer fighting game in which one can either take on the avatar of 'David Blandy' or that of the British artist's recurring alter ego 'the Lone Pilgrim', a samurai warrior with traits familiar to anyone vaguely versed in kung fu pop culture. The Lone Pilgrim has some pretty cool moves, whereas the David Blandy character doesn't. The choice for the viewer is simple: inhabit the persona of the adult male with maturity, a work ethic and responsibilities, or indulge adolescent tendencies. It's a choice that a plethora of mostly male artists seem to be exploring in their practices, from Blandy's coopting of geek culture to Slater Bradley's tapping into the existential cool of numerous cultural outsider figures, and from Steven Shearer's idolisation of teen identity to Daniel Guzmán's aligning of rock motifs with those of his own Mexican heritage. For other artists, youthfulness is perhaps less overtly the subject of their work, but it's nonetheless present in the endless-summer, road-movie sensibility of Ryan McGinley's photos, the popular culture smacks of early Jonathan Meese and, to find a forerunner in the previous generation, the dropout punk ethos of Raymond Pettibon's drawings.

These artists do not just appropriate the signifiers of popular culture; they depict a subjectivity created through them. Though multifaceted in practice, they seem united in their public construction of an alternative identity that plainly and sometimes painfully reflects a representation of their own man-as-teenager identity construction. Shearer, for example, occupies this persona both in his choice of medium and in much of his subject matter. A series of works that took as their starting point the 1970s teenage pinup Leif Garrett (whom the artist apparently resembled in his own adolescent years) were billed by Shearer in a 2008 interview as a form of self-portraiture, documenting the melancholia of his own ageing. This identification with the teenage trope operates too in the obsessively detailed biro portraits the artist produces, which instantly evoke the classroom doodlings of a music fan. Indeed, music motifs are the mainstay of Shearer's output, ranging from *Activity Cell with Warlock Bass Guitar* (1997), an interactive installation in which the visitor can tuck himself away in a denlike structure to play the titular instrument, to the more recent series of paintings shown at Galerie Eva Presenhuber last year, in which various rock 'n' roll figures are depicted wielding guitars, the phallic symbolism inherent. This aspect of Shearer's practice has not escaped the notice of curators – he was coupled with Guzmán in *Double Album*, a 2008 exhibition at the New Museum, New York, that looked specifically at music and male identity.





A frequent motif in Guzmán's work is the skull, found in *El Gráfico*, a series of ink-on-paper works from 2008 (and exhibited in 2009 at London's Stephen Friedman Gallery). It is a symbol that has passed from the gothic connotations of *vanitas* into rock iconography; decisive for Guzmán's practice, however, is that the skull is also representative of his Mexican identity, given its heavy presence in the country's folk symbolism, dating back to indigenous culture and still very evident in Day of the Dead celebrations. Likewise, a mask resembling the face paint worn by rock band Kiss, hung within the *Cloud Serpent* sculpture (part of the *Everything Is Temporary* series exhibited at Harris Lieberman Gallery in New York in 2009), could be read both as an artefact of pop culture and a nod towards the masks of *lucha libre*, or free wrestling (and the obsessive fandom of that culture). Guzmán mixes these two reference points, tellingly without a sense of hierarchy: he posits the influence of pop culture (Michael Jackson and Travis Bickle have also made appearances in his work) as being akin to that of national identity, where the artist is as much a construction of music and movies as of geography.

This dual representation of the self is showcased in Guzmán's 2008 film *The Secret of Evil*, in which two men, a poet and an activist, are overwhelmed by supernatural, zombielike creatures while in conversation about Mexico's social problems. A homage to the horror genre, it simultaneously riffs heavily on the Mexican veneration of the dead and the extreme gang violence that raises the country's mortality rates. 'Experiencing their work', wrote curator Richard Flood at the time of his pairing of Shearer and Guzmán at the New Museum, 'one immediately sees a parallel adoption of 1970s and 1980s pop icons and bands as surrogates and personal avatars'.

Slater Bradley uses surrogates more literally still, repeatedly employing a friend in his videoworks, Benjamin Brock, who – in a manner similar to Shearer's relationship to Leif Garrett – resembles Bradley. In the *Doppelganger Trilogy* (2001–4) Bradley investigates his own identity construction through the history of his music fandom, but he universalises this fabricating and seems to imply a transgenerational relevance by having his 'doppelganger' play the starring roles of Ian Curtis of Joy Division,



*In Guzmán's work,
the influence of
popular culture is
akin to that of
national identity*

Michael Jackson and Nirvana's Kurt Cobain in the restaging of three concerts. There's an easy eroticisation at play in this idolisation of celebrity figures; however, it's not just any icons Bradley is eulogising. They, like the artists profiled here, attempted within their work to extend or freeze their adolescent state, though admittedly Jackson's tabloid-documented obsession with staying 'forever young' and Curtis's and Cobain's suicides are extreme examples. The late novelist and critic Fred Pfeil offered an indicative example, prior to Cobain's death, of how the whole of the singer's persona resembled a fight against maturity, praising Cobain's 'ability to hold on to its insistent bored anger while individually and collectively refusing to be a man'. In an interview for *ArtReview* in 2007, Bradley told writer Tyler Coburn that he sees all these iconic characters as operating within 'Slaterland', seemingly hinting that they are being internalised – bored anger included – into his own subjectivity.

David Blandy, too, invests his practice with a psychoanalytical stance, each work actively investigating his identity. In *The White and Black Minstrel Show* (2007) Blandy performed Syl Johnson's *Is It Because I'm Black* (1968) with white makeup applied to his face and black makeup surrounding his mouth. In the run-up to a two-person exhibition at Stoke-on-Trent's AirSpace Gallery in February, the artist told me: "My work is taking the standpoint of the coloniser. I'm asking what it is to be black, and conversely what it is to be white. It's an absolute identification with the person who sees me as the enemy." Blandy's practice is about struggling to find an identity in the world, when his own – that of white middle-class male – has served as an oppressive benchmark for defining 'the other'. Syl Johnson was identified as the other – with the societal restraints that, as he sang it, "hold me back... putting the foot on me" – because he wasn't the colour of those who held the power. Blandy's escape is to forge an identity, completely unironically, through various

protagonists taken from popular culture, among them Ryu from the *Street Fighter* computer game (1987–) and Luke Skywalker of *Star Wars* (1977–83). These are teenage tropes of an outsider (Ryu operating in the city's underbelly and Skywalker a member of the Rebel Alliance in George Lucas's original trilogy of films), and Blandy inhabits them to distance his privileged position. (It is perhaps telling, by way of comparison, that in his 2010 film *The Child of the Atom*, which takes the more traditional method of tracing one's identity through family ties – in a meditation on the fact that the artist's grandfather would probably have died in a Japanese prison camp were it not for the dropping of the atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the resulting surrender by the Japanese – the artist felt comfortable including his young daughter. Her presence, and the adult responsibility she confers on her father, imbues Blandy's persona with more gravity than his previous work, with its appropriation of pop role models, would necessarily have invited.)

Such role models act as a replacement for the traditional construct of male identity – father, fighter – in society. While the use of adolescent motifs may arguably find some of its roots in the slacker art coming out of America during the mid-1990s – the drug references to be found in Pettibon's practice or the youthful exuberance of Jack Pierson's work when he turned to landscape photography – the persona that Blandy and others inhabit is not one widely recognisable among existing stereotypes of the male, or even more specifically, the male artist. The latter largely fell into queer-identity subdivisions (Warhol, Dalí and suchlike) or the macho mentality of Abstract Expressionism, Minimalism and, later, on this side of the Pond, the YBAs, with their arguable reflection of an anti-feminist, 'laddish' viewpoint. It is in these postwar milieux that Scottish academic David Hopkins, in his book *Dada's Boys* (2008), identifies 'an attitude of boisterous camaraderie among young men, predominantly but by no means





exclusively of working-class origins, who seemed stuck in late adolescence'. If anything, this postponement of adulthood has intensified in the past decade. Whereas the sniggering machismo of Koons and his immediate successors mimicked that of the late-teen discovering sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll, the 'eternal adolescence' strand of male artists post-2000 construct their personae through an even earlier (in terms of personal development) set of motifs, garnered from comics, cartoons, games and music.

More important, this appetite for manufacturing personality through pop culture is simply a reflection of a 'real' world in which the free market sustains permanent adolescence through endless access to the iconography. In collating thousands of images via the Internet for his c-print collages, Shearer is reflecting the globalised nature of, and the ease of access to, the motif of his own construction. In Bradley's *Boulevard of Broken Dreams* (2009) Benjamin Brock walks silently through the crowds on New York's Fifth Avenue. Brock, dressed all in black, plays the alienated youth effectively, referencing Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye* (1951) and M. Ageyev's *Novel with Cocaine* (1934). Yet while supposedly at odds with the luxury capitalism that surrounds him, this angry young man is obviously fashionable, his clothes sleek and slimming: debasing, with pervasive irony, the idea that the artist's use of these motifs – and the same can be said of Blandy, Guzmán and Shearer – is anything other than an inevitability of consumerism. •

David Blandy is in a two-person exhibition, with Antti Laitinen, at AirSpace, Stoke-on-Trent, 19 February – 26 March; Slater Bradley is exhibiting at the Whitney Museum of American Art until 23 January; Daniel Guzmán has a solo exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Oaxaca, in April; and Steven Shearer is to represent Canada at the Venice Biennale of Art, 4 June – 27 November

WORKS
(IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

Steven Shearer, *Kaleidoscope II*, 2006–7, digital c-print, 184 x 205 cm (framed), edition of 3 + 1 AP, 3 of 3. Courtesy Stuart Shave/Modern Art, London, and Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zurich

Daniel Guzmán, *Choyas Heladas* (from the *El Gráfico* series), 2009, carbon paper and ink on paper 122 x 122 cm (unframed), 130 x 130 x 5 cm (framed). Photo: Stephen White. © the artist. Courtesy the artist and Stephen Friedman Gallery, London

Slater Bradley, *Doppelgänger Trilogy* (*Recorded Yesterday*, 2004, *Phantom Release*, 2003, *Factory Archives*, 2001), 2001–4, 3 projections from digital sources, dimensions variable, edition 3 of 3

Steven Shearer, *Geometric Healing*, 2010 (installation view). Photo: Stefan Altenburger Photography. © the artist. Courtesy Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zurich

David Blandy, *The White and Black Minstrel Show*, 2007. Photo: Claire Barrett. Courtesy the artist

David Blandy, *Duels and Dualities: Battle of the Soul*, 2010. Courtesy the artist

David Blandy, *Child of the Atom*, 2010. Photo: Claire Barrett. Courtesy the artist

Slater Bradley, *Boulevard of Broken Dreams*, 2009, projection from a digital source, HD, 4-channel surround sound, edition 1 of 3. Courtesy Max Wigram Gallery, London



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Sheela Gowda, *Collateral*, (detail), installation, Documenta 12, Kassel, 2007 © the artist

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Having learned how to be an artist
in 1950s Mexico, through the
school of Diego Rivera and Frida
Kahlo, and then honing his skills
via collaborations with Alejandro
Jodorowsky and work on films such
as 'Alien' and 'Tron', the French
artist **Moebius** has gone on to
become one of the
leading comic-book
makers of our time

-

WORDS: PAUL GRAVETT



TWO OF FRANCE'S GENIUSES of contemporary comics, Moebius and Jean Giraud, are one man. Like his enigmatic namesake, the strip of twisted paper discovered by German mathematician August Möbius in 1858, Moebius and Giraud form one continuous, entwined identity. Since 1963 Giraud has made his name illustrating and later also writing some 30 albums about the rugged, rebellious US cavalry officer Lieutenant Blueberry, initially modelled on Jean-Paul Belmondo, crafting one of the world's most vivid and humane westerns in any medium. Also in 1963 Giraud adopted his punning Moebius nom de plume to sign solo humour strips for *Hara Kiri* magazine. It would not be until after 1968, however, amid the heady French revolution in adult auteur comics, that his Moebius side emerged as a fully-formed visionary universe-builder, infusing science fiction with an intense reality and spirituality. Now seventy-two and being feted with an in-depth retrospective at the Fondation Cartier, Paris, he has come a long way since failing to qualify at art school for the illustration department and being relegated to designing wallpaper. Along the way, Mexico has proved a recurrent catalyst in his personal and artistic growth. This began in 1956, when Jean, still a student, was already selling enough comics to magazines to travel there on his summer break to reconnect with his recently remarried mother.

"I first saw the desert on a Greyhound bus trip, and that vision burned my brain forever. I met Mexico, a magical country, and was adopted as the mascot by a bunch of radical anti-American artists, writers, poets, journalists living the bohemian life. They were the continuation of a culture of revolution, in murals, and the school of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo. I learned that to be an artist is to connect your story to a bigger story, to the history of humanity. They initiated me into the practice of art, modern jazz, playing chess, and to marijuana. Not for fun but to use as a tool for creation, different from the approach to drugs during the 1960s. I did not draw, but I spent my days walking, discussing, observing, absorbing. I stayed longer and missed my third year of school, but I thought I was learning something more important. It completely transformed me."



Returning to Paris too late to finish art school, Giraud pursued comics and became an assistant and eventually collaborator on the cowboy series *Jerry Spring*, by Belgium's Joseph Gillain (Jijé). From his mentor, Giraud acquired a fulsome, supple brush technique and a passion for realism and authenticity, which hugely enhanced his own western project, *Blueberry*. Here he unveiled a distinctive, convincing American West of multicoloured vistas and uncanny rock formations.

Giraud's return to Mexico in 1965 marked another revelatory stage. "I tried to contact those artists, but they had disappeared. As for my mother, I couldn't find her house. I had nightmares about it for years: I was always in a big city, trying to find a house and never finding it. For six months I learned how to be alone, with my thinking, trying to build an identity for my personal use, not for communication in society. Many people are never alone in their life. I recommend loneliness as a theme for study." Meditation, magic mushrooms, fasting, all brought fresh insights and contributed to the extraordinary eruption of Moebius in the early 1970s. This culminated in his cocreating the magazine *Métal Hurlant* in 1975, home to the haunting, wordless voyages of Arzach, astride his pterodactyl, and the totally improvised, interdimensional *Airtight Garage* saga.

Mexico would come to him in Paris that year in the form of the Chilean-born writer-director Alejandro Jodorowsky, a maverick playwright in Mexico and cofounder of the absurdist Panic Movement. "I met him by pure accident. He was looking out for me for his *Dune* movie and knew my work. I had seen his movie *Holy Mountain* [1973] six months before and was knocked out, because it gave me another way of perceiving the world. Jodorowsky had been a showman, very much on the surface. But now he was going deeper inside, working especially in Tarot. He gave me direct proof that it was possible to open the door inside." Although the *Dune* project never happened, Jodorowsky, nine years older than Moebius, became another vital mentor and creative partner, scripting their epic science-fiction graphic novel *The Incal* (1981–9).

Dune also introduced Moebius to the movie business, where he has contributed ever since, from *Alien* (1979) and *Tron* (1982) to *The Abyss* (1989) and *The Fifth Element* (1997). "Los Angeles is also part of Mexico, the Wasp side. I love LA, I like driving, to be stuck on the freeway in the middle of beautiful cars!" As for getting movie proposals of his own made, to date Moebius has had less success. "I am not a producer or director, I only draw. Of course I love the cinema, I have been fed by film since the beginning. My collaborations with movies have given me more than all my books. It's a big industry; comics are a bit on the side." He is heading off again to Hollywood with the dream of realising a feature based on his own work, demonstrated by a new eight-minute pilot for a 3D computer-animated version of his marooned space-travellers Stel and Atan. He has also dusted off his unfilmed script for a Japanese proposal to animate Arzach and turned it into the first of a trilogy of oversize albums reviving his mute voyager, now speaking and embroiled in a racist society analogous to that which encouraged the white man's suppression of Native Americans.

Moebius's latest return trip to the desert arrived as the self-published cycle *Inside Moebius* (2007–10), partly a surreal Pirandello-like metafiction about his six characters wandering the wastelands in search of their author, and partly a therapeutic inner



exploration, as shown in the Strip at the back of this issue of *ArtReview*. "It came after I had some health problems and took medicine which made a hole in my stomach. I was on the bus; I had to get out; I threw up some black blood and fainted. I woke up in hospital with all these tubes in me. *Inside Moebius* became an allegory, a way to be completely free, to play with different versions of me, and to be funny." These six volumes overflow with unfettered, free-flowing invention; he even responded to 9/11 by introducing Osama bin Laden into his cast. "Since the beginning, my desire is to be boundless, without limits, while still being a good seller for the publishers. There's always a tension there, but we can make choices on paper. The virginity of a simple sheet of paper is the desert." ■

Moebius-Trans-Forme is on show at the Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain, Paris, through 13 March

WORKS
(IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

Portrait of Blueberry, 1973

Drawing for the cover of 'Inside Moebius, Volume 6', 2010

Preparatory drawing for 'Arzach', 1975

'Box Office', 1994

Preparatory drawing for 'Arzach', 1995

all works

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IN THE CLASSIC MAGIC TRICK, the magician shows us his silk handkerchief. He whirls it around, makes the fabric ripple in the air. He drapes it over something – his hand, a top hat – and waves a magic wand, then whips the silk away. To the delight of the audience, a white dove or an equally snowy rabbit appears. All this time a living creature with a fast heartbeat has been hiding in the magician's sleeve. The eyes have been deceived, but only insofar as they have also been seduced by the language of the performance: fluttering silk, the covering and revealing of a living thing. The language of the actions creates pleasure and tension. Looking at the works of Daniel Sinsel, whose paintings revel in deploying a *trompe l'oeil* technique – that particularly painterly feat of visual deception – one wonders if they might belong to another age, before special effects, when people still believed physical forms of magic. Indeed, the German-born, London-based artist says that sometimes he likes to imagine that he inhabits an alternative present in which Modernism and abstraction had never existed.

A recent untitled painting of Sinsel's depicts the interior of a shallow box or recess that is rendered in a shade of pale apple-green. Inside we can see a wooden stick, propped up at an angle, resting on a bed of crumpled white silk. The juxtaposition exists to highlight contrasts: soft and hard, skin and bone, fluid and rigid, passive and active. You can find similar dynamics in paintings such as Titian's *Diana and Actaeon* (1556–9), for example. The drama

In recent years people
have been disappearing
from **Daniel**
Sinsel's paintings,
replaced by objects
that explore the

suggestive tensions
in materials and
spaces. Is this
really all thanks
to the magic of
pasta making?

–

WORDS: LAURA MCLEAN-FERRIS





though it might be able to behave more like a mouth or a hand. Another untitled painting from 2008 describes a pale jade wall with a neat shallow recess or cubbyhole in it. There is terracotta underpainting beneath the green, creating the impression of aged painted wood or tile. Lying in the recess are some lumpy shapes resting beneath yellow fabric that appears heavy, thick and glossy. What's under there? It looks faintly like a penis and balls, but then again, it's a bit of a jokey tease, leaving enough room for doubt. It's actually, Sinsel informs me, pasta draped on eggs and swedes (is that a vegetable in your pocket, or are you just pleased to see me?). In a related sculptural work, a lone egg balancing atop a copper rod is covered with a tiny sheet of draped pastalike fabric made from flour and glue, so that it looks like a tiny ghost floating in midair. Both of these works have something comic to them, something ever so slightly pathetic, silly and sad, as though there is something hiding under the covers, waiting to be discovered.

However, it's also the alchemy of turning one material into a representation of another material that informs Sinsel's attitude. "I think about how magical it is to describe a material with another material", he says. "Possibly by means of something as simple as ground soil and oil. I like the poetic potential of the relationship of the material used to the material it describes." He tries to work with natural substances whose construction he can understand: silk, oil paints and pigment, eggs, pine tar, rabbit-skin glue, pasta. He strongly rejects plastic paints that have been developed in a lab, or preprimed and stretched canvases for painting on – the

of the scene, in which Actaeon discovers the goddess bathing, is heightened for the viewer by the theatrical way in which it is revealed, extensive pink drapery pulled to the side, and by how Actaeon's arm and the quiver of arrows on his back are raised, angled upward, creating points of tension. "What I like so much as a viewer of a Renaissance painting", says Sinsel, "is that I can treat it both as a material object and as a set of depictions". In Sinsel's paintings this set of pictorial devices functions on its own, stripped of everything but the most basic dramatic apparatus: pointy stick and drapery.

On the day we meet, Sinsel is creating a seamless fabric sculpture. It is a large, architectural structure, resembling soft floppy columns or pillars between small ceiling and base sections (a similar conflation of hardness and softness), and it is constructed entirely from continuous sections of raw silk. Rather than sewing sections together, he says, he has – with some assistance – been handweaving the tiny silken threads, so that there won't be any joins in the sculpture when it is complete, just a continuous, sealed surface. A person in the same studio building who regularly works with fabric recently saw what Sinsel was doing and stood there, incredulous. Are you mad? Why don't you just use a sewing machine?, she had asked. Sinsel shifts about uncomfortably as he tells this story. He says that it's at such moments that he also wonders why he is taking so much trouble. But he seems clear that the sculpture wouldn't be right if the seams were exposed, like a weakness.

This is partly, perhaps, due to the role that sight plays within Sinsel's paintings. Peeking and trying to look under things, peering at cuts, punctures, slices and slits, forms part of the pleasure in looking at them; the eye takes an active, physical role here, as





*The erotics
being explored
in Sinsel's
newest works are
those of spaces,
objects and
architectures*



kind that you can buy, standard size, wrapped in plastic. The magic of transmutation is compromised by these kinds of materials, Sinsel suggests; there is something too literal about paint made with acrylic that is produced exclusively for painting. “I guess it affects the range of what one can invent with these materials”, he says. “The paintings become very literal this way.” Which is to say, if one found the right shade of green to paint a blade of grass, one could just use that premade colour instead of trying to create something that physically emulates the visual qualities of grass. “A well-known example is that of painting flesh”, Sinsel explains. “Skin could be painted with a flesh tint or could be made up with layers of paints that try and imitate a skinlike surface, with underlying colder greens or blues, transparent layers of whites or browns or reds on top.”

This very physical, holistic treatment of painting and its attendant structural materials is just one part of what makes looking at Sinsel’s paintings a sensuous activity. References to food, such as painted and sculptural elements that resemble chocolate bars or pasta, have made regular appearances in his work in recent years, coinciding with the abandonment of the human subjects that characterised his work up until then. Where previous paintings regularly featured highly sexualised images of men and boys, exploring a violent kind of erotics played out on bodies and faces painted on bright expanses of colour, it now appears that the erotics being explored are those of spaces, objects and architectures. Indeed, Sinsel describes making his first pasta works as a turning point: so much was he enjoying making tortelloni at home that he tried to replicate the experience in the studio, as a way of tricking himself into making new work. He cut circles from linen, the material that he usually paints on, and began wrapping and folding them as though they were pasta shapes and fixing them to a painting’s surface in groups at different stages in the folding process. He also began to make sheets of fresh pasta and set them up as drapery for still life paintings, as seen in the painting of the covered eggs. For Sinsel, a sheet of fresh yellow pasta dough builds “a satisfying bridge between drapery and flesh. It carries erotic and sensual potential that I now find more subtle and suggestive. It represents a shift in my work from the more overtly sexual to a more universal and suggestive, dormant eroticism.” Indeed the tortelloni pieces look like they could be orifices, and as we see them presented in a step-by-step sequence, we can imagine the tactile process of their creation. Paintings themselves often appear to have slits or cuts in them, or to be made by weaving – an in-out movement. They remain highly sexual images, but there is a sense in which the viewer also creates this element of the painting as she looks at it: the eye travels in and out of various spaces, real and imagined.

This innuendo in Sinsel’s work allows a kind of light bawdy humour – bundles of nuts make regular appearances in his paintings, for example – but within a strange and pervasive atmosphere of stillness, of closed rooms and objects waiting to be used. There’s a white painting that resembles a windowpane that is also a wall – a completely sealed white claustrophobic space. Another regular motif is an unplayable flute with no mouth or finger holes, a phallic object perhaps, but also a melancholy one.



That said, in one painting, three flutes seem to be moving in and out of slits in the canvas, performing a kind of visual music rather than an aural one. Somehow, if there is magic here, it is not just that of the painter’s sleight-of-hand convincing us that one material is another; perhaps too there is the magic that allows us to participate in bringing these dormant painted objects to vital, sensual life. If we imagine for a second that we ourselves can whip the covers off, throw the windows open and let the dove fly from the sleeve, then another strange kind of magic has happened.

Work by Daniel Sinsel is on view at the Chisenhale Gallery, London, 28 January – 13 March

WORKS
(IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

Untitled, 2009, terracotta, copper, eggshell, plaster, wheat flour, pH neutral PVA glue, 29 x 23 x 23 cm

Untitled, 2009, oil on linen, 45 x 44 x 3 cm

Untitled, 2009, bronze, sapele wood, bistre ink, 99 x 52 x 50 cm

Untitled, 2008, oil on canvas, 32 x 26 x 3 cm.

Tortelloni, 2005, linen, silk, cornelian, 59 x 62 cm

Untitled, 2010, oil on canvas, 51 x 36 x 3 cm

Untitled, 2010, oil on linen, 81 x 66 x 3 cm

[all images](#)

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Matthew Hindley, *The Ache of Marriage*. 2010, oil on Belgian linen, 200 x 300cm
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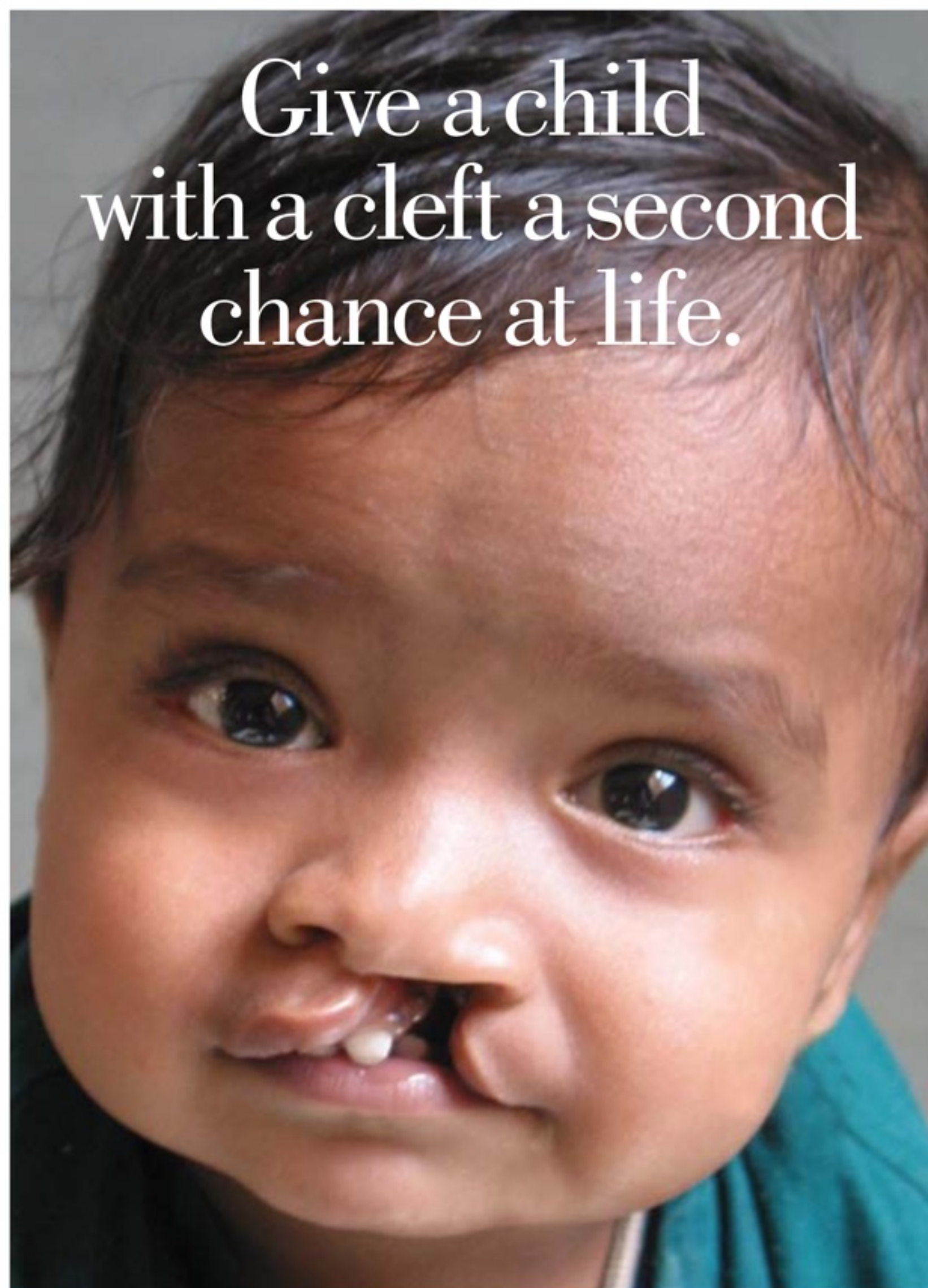
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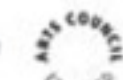


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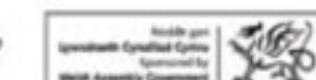
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David Maljkovic *Recalling Frames*

Sprüth Magers, London
5 November – 23 December

If the end of the Cold War left the West without a sense of what it was for or whom it was supposed to be against, for those countries of Eastern Europe from which Stalinism suddenly vanished, that break was experienced as a more total rupture with the past. Croatian artist David Maljkovic's work in video, collage and photography doesn't parade itself as part of the growing discussion over 'postcommunist' art, but rather attempts to probe the experience of estrangement from history that such ruptures impose on the present.

Maljkovic's first solo show at Sprüth Magers's London gallery consists of a solitary film-projection installation in one space and a series of framed photographs in another. Maljkovic takes as his source Orson Welles's 1962 film adaptation of Kafka's *The Trial* (1925), the claustrophobic, paranoiac film noir atmosphere of which entraps a young Anthony Perkins, in the role of Josef K. Locations for Welles's film were found in the Croatian capital of Zagreb, at that time part of communist Yugoslavia. For the collectively titled series *Recalling Frames* (all works 2010), Maljkovic has located the still-standing buildings and urban vistas featured in the film, superimposing particular scenes with contemporary photographs of the same locations, almost 50 years later. The clean surfaces and stark perspectives of a vast modernist housing block appear frequently, pristine in the filmic original, worn and graffiti-plastered in today's reality. Perkins's awkward, besuited and panicked everyman K. hovers like a restless ghost between 'then' and 'now'.

Maljkovic's photos aren't slick digital composites. Instead they're one-offs, made by physically splicing and sandwiching different negatives in the darkroom enlarger. The two worlds – one a fiction inscribed in the fabric of a now-disappeared regime, the other the documentary record of the Croatia of the present – are fused together but never really touch. As in much of Maljkovic's work, it is the physical continuity of architecture that stands as the only verification that the past actually took place – though what anyone understands or remembers of that past is a different matter. Welles's *The Trial* recast Kafka's nightmare of bureaucratic violence as a parable of the existential angst of the Cold War – the suited conformist 'little man' lost in a modernist, technocratic, rationally administered society. K.'s futile search for meaning – merely to know what he is accused of – becomes here the impossibility of reconnecting with the lost Modernism not only of another epoch, but of another kind of society.

That gap between now and then is made spatial in the film installation: a reflective screen both presents and reflects a film projection full of nothing but whiteness and dust flecks and scratches. Behind it a large photograph reprises a scene from *The Trial* in which K. is seen standing against a screen. His head and shoulders are however absent from the frame; a rectangle has been cut from the original negative, leaving only a black void where the image should be. The soundtrack crackles with an indistinct clip of audio from the film. A sort of double blindness is figured in the space between the projection screen and the photographic image – between a cinematic fragment trying to address us from the past, and the cinematic obliteration of representation in the present. Maljkovic's images evoke the strange experience of a present whose obsession with reconnecting with the past is the symptom of its complete disconnection from it. *J.J. Charlesworth*



Recalling Frames, 2010 (installation view).
Photo: Stephen White. Courtesy the artist
and Sprüth Magers, London & Berlin

As an artist, Roe Ethridge is probably destined to remain in the shadow of brassier talents such as Wolfgang Tillmans and Juergen Teller, similarly adaptable lensmen who flit between fine art and fashion editorial, and who constellate disjointed, world-scouring images in galleries. He began later than they did, and his art practice has been quieter, as befits an artist who rehearsed the objectivist style of the Bechers before pursuing a knowing confusion of typologies that feels more true to experience. No overt politics, no paunch-and-dick shots. Ethridge's immediate understatement, though, is his long-term strength. If *4th Floor* looks at first like 11 photographs divvied into four discrete subsets, plus a dusting of disposable furniture-sculpture, over time it coheres – mostly – into an improbably satisfying dissertation on navigating the material world via sensory/sensual continuities.

Culled from a five-year commission photographing for Goldman Sachs, documenting the rise of their new HQ in Lower Manhattan, three forensic photographs entitled *4th Floor* (2008) take an angled assessment of floors covered in sand, tyre tracks, dustings of blue spraypaint and fragments of polythene: dirty rawness on its way to being a seat of capitalism, say what you like about surfaces and sedulous concealing. *Spec House 11* and *Spec House 8*, shot during 2009, are studies in wood, wetness and photographic history. The first is a sturdily vectored study of a timber stairway and timber floors sheened with rainwater that has poured into the house, the second a Doc Edgerton-ish study of water streaming onto maker-stamped ply, droplets caught coursing through the air like tiny transparent comets.

This historical nod is germane: Ethridge has previously photographed birds in motion, absorbing Muybridge into a practice that has enfolded portraiture, architectural photography, still life, whatever. Here the categorical muddling is bluntly effected by *Paradis* (2010), five photographs for the eponymous French men's magazine that are effectively David Hamilton without the soft focus: a young woman soaps her breasts in a rustic shower, cultural theory gets turned into a cartoon by a voyeuristic eye peeking through a knot in the wood and there's a final view of the deserted shower's vaguely phallic apparatus. One last photograph: *Wave Break* (2010), a close-up of a mop bucket, in a gorgeously synthetic blue. The fascination of this uneasy grouping, though, is the ping-ponging game of transference that bubbles up within it: between water running on chemical-filled wood, water running on wood and flesh, water in a bucket and dirty flooring. The absent mop wants to wash the dirty trading floors, the girl's soap leaps into the bucket, the voyeur is dirty, the girl is clean and the viewer feels dirty or cleansed, depending.

The misstep in this neat repurposing of editorial and personal work into a singular vision is to drag it into the realm of the real world by including *7th Floor* (2010). A room-dividing block of shelving from the artist's own studio involving both newish and old wood, and carrying one plangent brown shoe, it reads as coy, unhelpful quirkiness and might best be seen as a distancing move, a crack at game-changing. Ethridge is no sculptor, but no matter. When it comes to asserting abstract properties using figurative means, he's a formidable photographer. *Martin Herbert*



Roe Ethridge *4th Floor*

Greengrassi, London
26 October – 22 December

4th Floor #2, 2008, phototex print,
178 x 137 cm, edition 1 of 5.
Courtesy Greengrassi, London

Matt Johnson

Alison Jacques Gallery, London
13 October – 13 November



For a reclining nude, *Odalisque* (all works 2010) is not conventionally seductive. At first glance the sculpture appears to be an oversize figurative hunk of clay crudely worked by hand: a maquette rather than a finished work. In fact, *Odalisque* is a highly finished item rendered in matt bronze. The title and pose of the figure recall those Ottoman temptresses depicted over and over again on canvas by countless nineteenth-century painters of orientalist themes (Ingres, Delacroix and Renoir all painted her, sprawled topless in a seraglio). Being the size of a small cow, she weighs a ton I imagine. Above all, it's a really funny work: a fat muse, resplendent, blubbery and wickedly absurd.

Los Angeles-based artist Matt Johnson has a keen intelligence for unfreighting seriousness from art history. *Grotesque at Prayer* is probably the most sophisticated work in the show: what at first appears to be a large scrunched-up ball of tinfoil slowly resolves itself into a bust with a cowl of hair, a globular nose and two crude hands pressed in supplication to its lips. Unlike *Odalisque*, this work plays upon the slow reveal; the unfolding of abstract form into figuration is not immediate. The reference here is to that which is dank and hidden ('grotesque' comes from the word 'grotto'). Johnson's *Grotesque at Prayer* similarly attempts to shiver from view, its stainless-steel body folding light, mirroring the viewer.

Beekeeper is a more straightforward stone item that bears some resemblance to traditional African sculpture. There's no double bluff here: it doesn't look like a lump of clay or a ball of foil. The twist is the hair, which is a close-crop Afro composed of hundreds of lifesize bees cast in bronze, though I'm not sure I quite see the point of this – for me, David Hammons's brilliant *Rock Head* (various dates) is the definitive anthropomorphic stone-with-an-Afro (a one-liner that really hits home). Johnson's most enigmatic work here is *American Spirit*, an ersatz model of a packet of the eponymous brand of American cigarettes that levitates (with the aid of hidden magnets) on a plinth. The trick is tawdry, but it's also bafflingly affecting.

While Johnson's sculptures are jocose, they also nudge towards the spiritual. In the press release, the artist quotes Pythagoras for how one might seek 'supernatural, infinite existence within the finite'. Johnson, a former student of Charles Ray, finds these moments in quotidian gestures, which he monumentalises to exacting aesthetic standards. (For example, his 2004 work titled *Breadface* is a visage apparently bitten from a slice of toast, which recalls the tabloid-friendly manifestation of Jesus or Mary in believers' victuals.) It'd be too much to claim that I get a spiritual kick out of this show, but Johnson's earthy spiritualism certainly transcends the binary tricks (high art/pop culture; art history/quotidian gestures) that he deploys to such immediate effect. *Colin Perry*

Odalisque, 2010, bronze,
94 x 185 x 94 cm. Courtesy
the artist and Alison
Jacques Gallery, London

Only an artist whose practice came of age in the 1960s could turn video clips into a three-act play, ceremoniously opened by digital red curtains, with intermissions solemnly danced out by a tangoing duo. But while Sturtevant's nine-screen installation *Elastic Tango* (2010) hams up the bathos and McMorality of TV culture, it can't simply be reduced to a critique of populist culture as pure spectacle or meaningless simulacrum. It is too lovingly choreographed to music, too indulgent of the imagery's seductive appeal, to be the work of a technological curmudgeon or high-art elitist. Sturtevant's videowork is as perverse and elegant as her infamous copies of modern masters.

The first two acts of *Elastic Tango* are a Tourette's-syndrome stream of images from contemporary consumer culture and kidult entertainment. Sturtevant's versions of Duchamp's Rotoreliefs and a Paul McCarthy performance pop up among stock imagery and clips from her own recent videos. The last of these are, to the unsuspecting eye, indistinguishable from a YouTube home movie or generic TV advert. They're also a test, one suspects, of whether the audience is paying attention; she expects you to know her previous work.

There's a strong sense of unease towards American patriotism and its feel-good symbols: the Stars and Stripes, a sports coach shouting at a girl to chew her sandwich and a raft of anthropomorphised animals and cartoon characters, such as Betty Boop or a dog with imploring eyes who repeatedly exclaims, "Somebody beat me!" It's as if Sturtevant's move to France gives her the distance and self-consciousness to critique her native American culture, while acknowledging its enduring cultural power.

Many of the clips are speeded up or looped, such as the dog that runs interminably, as if to prove that nothing need come to an end in TV world. Whole sequences are repeated, but everything happens so fast and in an already arbitrary order that it takes a while to figure out that the second act basically repeats the first, only cropped to a third of its original frame. The final act is an odd montage of stock imagery from nature and sports programmes, the kind of stuff that wows kids and is used to sell high-definition TV sets. Frogs leap, a diver twists in midair, a lily opens; sublime moments rendered utterly corporate by stock-footage-collection logos and image reference-numbers branding all the clips. In *Elastic Tango*, the tangoing duo replaces any ad breaks because everything is for sale, from the stock imagery to the videowork itself.

Sturtevant, now eighty, has impressively kept up with changing artistic techniques and technologies. Once she seemed to out-Warhol Warhol in her defiance of copyright regulations and her overturning of hierarchical posturing. Today *Elastic Tango* pumps up our digital viewing experience to a level of orgasmic intensity that leaves 'original' TV seeming flat by comparison. *Jennifer Thatcher*

Sturtevant

Elastic Tango

Anthony Reynolds Gallery, London
13 October – 4 December



Elastic Tango, 2010, video installation, three-act video play on nine monitors. © the artist. Courtesy Anthony Reynolds Gallery, London

Andrew Lord

Milton Keynes Gallery
24 September – 28 November

At the end of Milton Keynes Gallery's exhibition of work by Andrew Lord, upstairs past three galleries of exquisitely installed ceramics, plaster sculptures and drawings, is a one-hour-37-minute-long video of Lancastrian morris dancers performing in blackface. Lord, a Lancashire-born artist living in New York, has said that 'making objects has been a way for me to understand things I've found incomprehensible'. *Britannia Coconutters Dance Through Bacup, Easter Sunday* (2009) is one of a series of films made by the artist over the past three years in and around the area in which he was raised. Despite his incomprehension, it is possible that Lord recognises something of the morris tradition's defiant oddness, and its anachronism, in his own practice.

Lord has spent much of his four-decade career making ceramic vessels and studying Meissen porcelain and the glazed terracotta of the Della Robbia workshop. He would bristle, however, at being labelled a potter. *Sixteen Pieces. Angled* (1986), one of the earliest and most striking works in the show, is his attempt to give form to the shadows thrown by another group of rounded jugs, vases, cups and bowls. The result looks like a spiky black Soviet tea set remade by Richard Serra. Nearby, Lord has taken Edgar Rubin's famous optical illusion – the vase whose contours describe the negative space of a face in profile – and applied it to Marcel Duchamp's distinctively aquiline features. For *Profile Vase (Duchamp)*, 'Lunch Poems'/O'Hara, *Weight, Left and Right Eye* (2002) Lord has complicated the illusion by dangling on threads a ceramic plumb-bob and including casts of his own eyes where Duchamp's eye and brain would be, perching the whole lot on a volume of poetry by Frank O'Hara.

These two works tether the artist's chief preoccupations: an impulse to give form to the ineffable (whether shadow, thought or optical effect) with fingers and wet clay; a fascination with what is lost – and found – in translation between two and three dimensions; and an attentiveness to the work of his forebears that often manifests itself in reference and homage. The ceramic vessel is an ideal carrier for such splashy concerns. It is, formally, a plane folding itself into an object. And it is modelled around an absence; its 'thingness', as Heidegger pointed out, 'does not lie at all in the material of which it consists, but in the void that it holds'.

Lord does not limit himself to jugs, of course. Many works, such as the wall-mounted *Inside My Mouth* (2010), feature plaster or beeswax impressions of parts of his body. In the stunning final room of the exhibition, attenuated forms based on images from Lord's childhood – Blackpool Tower, a Lancashire valley and, of course, those sinister morris dancers – are summoned like pale memories beneath gloopy, crackling glazes. Lord's fingers leave impressions everywhere. His body is the void held by these objects, his identity that which gives them their 'thingness'. *Jonathan Griffin*



Andrew Lord, 2010, installation view.
Photo: Andy Keate. Courtesy Milton Keynes Gallery

Interiors are a way of thinking, feeling and believing. In his latest solo show, Marc Camille Chaimowicz uses a full repertoire of more than 50 works to intimate interiority as a subjective disposition. He blends new works with the more familiar languid daydreamers, decor and domestic minutiae of *Man Looking Out of Window* (1984/2006) and *Here and There* (1978/2009). *For I.H.* (1980/1987/2010) is a potpourri of hand-printed moodboards convalescing against the walls of a clean, well-lighted place. It's hard to situate this palette of pinks, pale greys, powder-blues, sea-foam-green, white, and ivory – it might be from the 1920s, 50s or 80s. It induces a molar sensation of time.

Many of the rooms contain custom-made bookcases, some carefully stacked with modern ceramics (*Vase*, 1988–90) or book jackets designed by Chaimowicz (*Bibliothèque*, 2009). Scallop-shaped furniture legs resemble typographic quotation marks, opening and closing the form. They are a decorative take on ball-and-claw feet and the kidney-shaped droplets of 'Scottish' paisley pattern rather than signifiers of ironic appropriation. These botanical motifs are well adjusted to Inverleith House, a Georgian townhouse that sits in the middle of Edinburgh's Royal Botanic Garden. The decorative motifs and shelves that repeat through the house are adjusted in timbre by their placement and by the light and scale of their surroundings. Each time they are different in impression and character.

Chaimowicz's interiors are an interminable rehearsal for venturing out. In an adjacent room, a decorative *Parasol* (2009) lies open on the ground, as if drying out after a rainstorm. Fittingly, Chaimowicz includes *La Chambre Rose* (1910–11), an indulgently framed painting by the intimist painter Edouard Vuillard, in this room. This hung in Inverleith House when it was home to the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art (1960–84) – the past and present vibrating simultaneously.

The leitmotif of dressing-up climaxes in the penultimate still life. The nearside of *Four Part Folding Screen* (1979) is swaddled with images of a tryst; the farside, a jazzy motif in a decorative roll, reflects in the mirror of a vanity table that sits behind it. Perched on a floral motif rug, *Coiffeuse (Dressed)* (2008) is carefully strewn with personal effects. They form incidental vignettes, each more an impression of the sensation of 'getting ready' than a character sketch or symbolic gesture. A fox stole, lingerie and pearls droop from a drawer with a contrived, aspirational levity. A customised Nokia mobile phone serves as a paperweight for a matching-patterned journal. A table lamp lurches over a parcel of pastel-coloured letters, secured with a pink silk ribbon.

A miscellany of glamour and routine, this *mise en scène* is a contemporary conversation piece, a compendium of techniques for preparing to interact with others. It's an analogue of how we might marshal and continually recompose these relations in aestheticised conditions. In this, Chaimowicz is much indebted to the intimists; he's a master of tonality, improving the qualities of light(ness) and manipulating atmospheres. It is always as much a question of how his art *feels* as it is of how it looks. In his all-over pointillist-style decoration of the mobile and journal, composition of ephemera and harmonisation of tones and hues, Chaimowicz casts a thin gauze over the scene that, in turn, subtly alters the ambience of the room and, by implication, the world that lies beyond it. *Neil Mulholland*



Marc Camille Chaimowicz Inverleith House, Edinburgh
31 October – 6 February

Monika Sosnowska

Hauser & Wirth, New York
5 November – 18 December



My first encounter with Monika Sosnowska's work came at an early highpoint of her career, which is to say in Venice, in 2007, when her massive installation *1:1* occupied the Polish Pavilion during the 52nd Biennale. 'Occupied' here is meant in the sense of squatters occupying a building, or a regiment of easily incited soldiers occupying a town. The work consisted of a large steel skeleton, echoing a People's Poland-era housing block, which had been bent, crushed and wedged into the 1930s exhibition hall, a force-fit that thematised the deformations for which history is so often responsible. It was a literal clash of architectures, and it was clear that the forces involved were systemic, which is to say ideological.

This is not the case with Sosnowska's newest work, a series of similarly bent and deformed architectural fragments, again at 1:1 scale, this time based on the fire escapes seen everywhere in American cities with urban fabrics dating from the first half of the twentieth century. Sosnowska found her particular fire escapes in San Antonio, while an artist-in-residence at the highly esteemed contemporary art incubator and exhibition venue Artpace. There, three works, *Deck*, *Stairs* and *Ladder* (all works 2010), appeared familiarly wrenched and crumpled, but painted in beige, perhaps to reflect the southern climes in which they were conceived.

In New York, they're black; and they're joined by *Spiral* (as in staircase), *Fence*, *Balustrade* and *Handrail*. And importantly, they stand largely free of the surrounding architecture, and so lack a dialogue or intersection with it, even when hanging on the wall (as does *Stairs*) or wedged into a corner (as is *Deck*), which indicates that Sosnowska's deformations are no longer, or no longer largely read as, systemic. Now they appear more compositional, more, for lack of a better word, sculptural, and so carry a different, more disciplined, more solely aesthetic cast than her previous work.

This is unfortunate. Sosnowska's deformations depend upon contextual juxtapositions, and these are only barely there in the gallery; or rather, one feels that they need to be read into rather than out of the work. The juxtaposition I'm thinking of is the one between the figure of the fire escape itself, which was a hallmark of tenement apartments, and the townhouse interior in which that figure appears here – an interior, and an architecture, of a different social and economic class entirely. But there is no staging of this confrontation, and so no sense that the bending and breaking of the metal could be an effect of it. Though the works are in the space, they do not occupy it as *1:1* did, and so the nature of their evocations — that is, their politics — remains ambiguous at best.

Sosnowska has already proved herself to be one of the most promising artists currently working in, or on, what we might call the melancholy of Modernism. Let's hope that work continues. *Jonathan T.D. Neil*

Monika Sosnowska, 2010
(installation view).
Photo: Thomas Mueller.
© the artist. Courtesy the
artist and Hauser & Wirth,
London, New York & Zurich

Brody Condon & Jen Liu

On Stellar Rays, New York
29 October – 19 December

In their respective oeuvres, both Brody Condon and Jen Liu make objects that derive from the physically dimensionless realm of contemporary technologies. Whereas Condon investigates the effects of digital space on perception, Liu liberally employs the search processes available to artists in the twenty-first century, the Internet among them. Trying to relate the results in their two-person exhibition at On Stellar Rays imposes constraints that do not serve the work; it's best to see this as two separate shows.

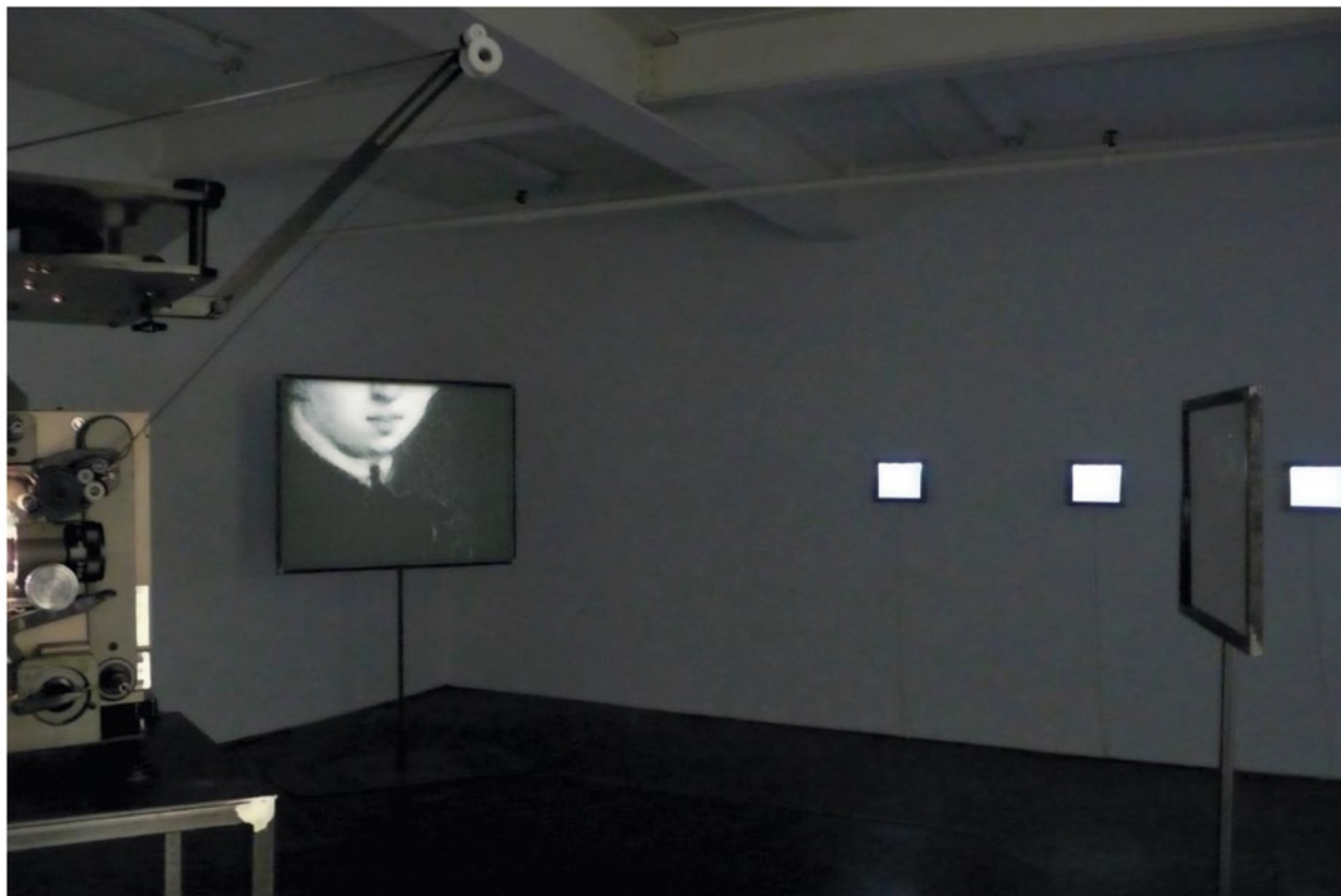
Condon's three short videos, entitled *Cube*, *Rhombus* and *Cubes* (all works 2010), are loops of hands holding transparent Plexiglas cubes of the artist's own construction. The forms, of dubious structural integrity, are turned this way and that in brilliant light, revealing technicolour faces caked with bright smeared paint; the suggestion of the digital is shot through with a refreshing lo-fi-ness. *Vat Flesh on a Pedestal of Imitation Jade*, an anthropomorphic freestanding sculptural mass in the centre of the gallery, establishes an almost inverse relationship to the video in terms of its immaterial starting point and material output: its precisely angled facets and cleanly patterned surfaces, about as slick as the surface of a computer screen, are characteristically recognisable as having been generated by a CAD program.

Liu's extrusions of Internet search findings into physical space are completed via what seems like an aleatory set of formal rules; while this is not inherently problematic, the work rehearses a set of tropes well travelled by any number of twentieth-century artists. More problematically, she seems undecided about whether to prioritise process or the final objects, which are often visually unsatisfying. Two large works on paper effect pictorial mashups. For example, in one she places a watery, Mondrian-like grid beside a news image of an undetermined correctional facility. There are no distinguishing material qualities to the hand-executed drawings save a general dullness of colour, nor attempts to allude to the original digital state of the image. Liu's use of the Web seems to spring more from ease of access than conceptual necessity. Shaped inkjet printouts on the wall, folded accordion-style in various places, offer darkened versions of billowing clouds drawn from Internet photographs of disasters worldwide. The pieces are too small to amplify the imposing nature of their subject matter, and too large to recall the original state in which Liu encountered them.

Liu's decisions obscure the position of the maker in her final product. Condon, through the actual incorporation of the body and allusions to it in his work, uses technology as a language or framework for highlighting the human inside the container of digital technology. The latter approach seems the more contemporary, as well as, on a visceral level, the more appealing.
T.J. Carlin



Brody Condon, *Vat Flesh on a Pedestal of Imitation Jade*, 2010, high-density urethane foam and inkjet decals, 61 x 61 by 122 cm. Photo: Adam Reich. Courtesy On Stellar Rays, New York



Caterina van Hemessen is 20 Years Old, 2009, 16mm film installation, 12 min (continuous loop), edition of 5. Courtesy Murray Guy, New York

Matthew Buckingham *Likeness*

Murray Guy, New York
6 November – 23 December

At a certain point, the voiceover in *Likeness* (2009), one of two new 16mm film installations by Matthew Buckingham on show at Murray Guy, declares: “It isn’t possible to make a true portrait of an animal, because animals don’t treat their own images as signs of themselves”. The statement seems odd at first, given the accompanying film, which consists solely of static shots of a single detail from Diego Velázquez’s 1659 portrait of Philip Prospero, the young Prince of Asturias: the face of the white dog seated on the armchair in front of the child.

We are invested in portraiture because we invest portraits with human presence. Based on two important portraits from Western art history, Buckingham’s well-researched and theoretically sophisticated installations reflect not just on these works’ specific histories but also on how such images might relate to the complex processes through which subjectivities and identities are formed, understood and represented.

Delivered in Spanish (with English subtitles), the text in *Likeness* seamlessly shifts address from painting to viewer and back. At times descriptive and anecdotal, it meanders through history and is peppered with observations and aphorisms on power and portraiture. The younger Philip was Philip IV’s much-needed male heir at a time of strategic importance. A sickly child, he died before turning four. Projected on a wooden crate, amidst pieces of antique furniture wrapped in moving blankets, the musty installation subtly evokes this subtext of an empire in decline.

Caterina van Hemessen Is 20 Years Old (2009) is based on a 1548 self-portrait by the eponymous painter, who is shown at work at an easel. Mirrors, necessary for the execution of self-portraits, structure the installation. The film forensically dissects the image into a series of lingering close-ups of a black-and-white reproduction of the painting. Reflected off a mirror onto a screen, the projection reverses the image, negating the inversion required to execute it. The text, distributed across numbered panels that gesture towards a sequential development that the text does not follow, weaves together fragments of van Hemessen’s biography, reflections on her place in art history and historical facts about mirrors and their growing importance for painters of her time. The text itself, printed in reverse, is readable with the aid of provided hand mirrors.

In taking as its subject what’s considered to be the earliest surviving portrait of an artist self-presenting as artist, the installation affords a moment of self-reflexivity (pun intended) about the creation of artistic identity, apt for a contemporary moment when artistic self-promotion is necessary for success. In fragmenting image and text, however, neither installation provides a full image of its ostensible subjects. Buckingham scrambles our equation of personhood and its representation, questioning the very possibility of a stable identity. As the term ‘likeness’ suggests, a painted portrait always approaches but is never identical to its subject. Buckingham’s elegant and precise installations inhabit this slightest of gaps. *Murtaza Vali*

Richard Hawkins

Third Mind

Art Institute of Chicago
22 October – 16 January

I too know well enough the early-morning pleasures of the east side of Hollywood, especially the 7-Eleven on the corner of Vermont and Franklin. No doubt it is the main source for Richard Hawkins's *Untitled (Taizo in City)* (1995), a three-dimensional collage that for me hit home particularly hard in this survey exhibition. Made of a derelict card-table topped by, for example, an emptied box of Apple Jacks cereal, an upside-down Styrofoam coffee cup (with its red-stamped 'Oh Thank Heaven...') and a freestanding (not quite paper-doll) magazine cutout of a picture of the Japanese male model Taizo Ito, it is a cityscape worthy of de Chirico or Beckett, as well as of the aforementioned corner, not far from where Hawkins used to live and where I still (on occasion) do.

I would argue that, transported here into a robust encyclopaedic museum, the desire that is constructed across the piece's limited terrain (proclaimed on the cup by Hawkins's reinscription, 'poetes maudit') is made all the more local by comparison. In other words, everything from the synaptic firing of its horizontal, interstitial spaces to the lifecycle of its surgical slices through image culture (the upside-down picture of an open coffin is a nice touch) gives this work extra capacity to ricochet off the history of art and land right back home.

By sticking to Hawkins's long-term use of collage, this exhibition highlights just how much his varied interests and practices have remained focused on renegotiations of the pain of displacement and the joys of its reconciliation, or vice versa, a perpetual cycle that can thrive anywhere but definitely drives LA. Whether found in a mashup of Marky Mark and Julian Schnabel paintings – *Brown Book*, (1992), which is wickedly encased in a vitrine in the museum's library alongside other examples of Hawkins's altered books – or in the cast of 1983's proto-Brat Pack film *The Outsiders* butted up against historical photographs of Native Americans – *The Greasers vs. The Socs (some of us didn't even know we were indians)* (2004), a set of 18 collages that also incorporate Hawkins's sketches and musings on the convolutions of assimilation – Hawkins always resists the easy way out of the either/or; an alternative is identified here as the third mind, after the title of the 1978 book by William S. Burroughs and Brion Gysin.

Nowhere is this refusal more potent than in his recent series of dollhouses, from the hidden treasures of the closed-up *House of the Mad Professor* (2008), looking like an entombed museum through its miniature windows, to the ramshackle stacking of *The Last House* and *Dilapidarian Tower* (both 2010) that seem, at first glance, to take us completely away from someplace like Los Angeles, unless you find yourself stuck on a studio lot. I'll admit, however, that that's not completely true: there are houses quite like *The Last House* in LA, and some of them, I'm sure, are inhabited by perfectly nice people. *Terry R. Myers*



Untitled (Taizo in City), 1995,
table with collage elements,
98 x 75 x 75 cm, collection
Art Institute of Chicago,
gift of Rena Conti



The Night Episode Three: Who's for Dinner?/The Watery Grave, 2010, single-channel video (colour, sound), 10 min. Courtesy the artists and Steve Turner Contemporary, Los Angeles

My Barbarian *The Night Episode*

Hammer Museum, Los Angeles
23 October – 23 January

"I am an elitist." "I am an elitist too." "The insurance... is being processed." "Sleep is a luxury in a doomed economy." So unspool the highly enunciated non sequiturs of a conversation in one of performance collective My Barbarian's new videos from *The Night Episode* (2010). The installation comprises six narrative videos satirising current social ills by filtering intractable issues such as gay marriage, unemployment and health insurance through song, Day-Glo colours and a sinister keyboard soundtrack which both addresses and lampoons their gravity. In the quoted episode, the members of My Barbarian – Malik Gaines, Jade Gordon and Alexandro Segade – play pretentious curators uttering absurdities while reviewing artists' slides. It's an appropriate setting for the performance collective's first solo museum show.

This atmosphere of low-tech DIY theatre pervades the work of LA-based My Barbarian, who have performed together for the past decade, bringing their campy blend of singing, dancing, music, homemade costumes and skitlike scenarios to galleries and stages worldwide. In one episode, a man (Segade) releases too many toxins while doing yoga and develops a disgusting skin disease that can only be cured by a witch doctor. In another video, an unemployed female (Gordon) at a job interview discovers that she can slip into another dimension: eerie music suddenly gushes in, and the screen turns negative and neon, pulsing with the strangeness of a different world. But is it the other dimension that's so odd? Or is sitting in some sad little office being asked banal questions about your past employment the unbearably peculiar experience? Either way, her access to the neon spirit world acts as an escape hatch from the interview and her frosty boyfriend (Gaines), who leaves her because her preexisting medical condition is making his health insurance too expensive. As the binds of bureaucracy continue to tighten around her neck (the company she interviews with goes under), she finally finds solace in the fact that a glowing white orb from the other dimension has crossed over into her world to offer companionship. But even alternative universes are full of bullshit: the affectionate orb reveals itself to be female, and thus unable to enter into (same-sex) marriage with our poor heroine. No job, no health coverage and not allowed to marry: despite its science-fiction format, it's a tale of anxiety that's wincingly familiar.

The Night Episode refreshingly denies a ponderous, cerebral or dry take on social problems. One senses, despite its utter contemporaneity, a tinge of Beckett or Bulgakov here, but seen through the lens of late-night television and California psychedelia. Silly storylines and shameless artifice are used as foils for the crap of life and its unfairness. But just because the works are entertaining and make you laugh out loud doesn't mean that they have been rendered entirely toothless. The videos' underlying absurdities ultimately form an ominous landscape of bureaucratic constraint that is so prevalent as to be nearly invisible. Staged ridiculousness seems as appropriate a resistance as any. *Lyra Kilston*

Amanda Ross-Ho

A Stack of Black Pants

Cherry and Martin, Los Angeles
6 November – 18 December

In the work of Amanda Ross-Ho, bigger is not necessarily better. Her exhibition *A Stack of Black Pants* is packed with images, objects and interventions, some of them grand in scale and some nearly invisible. One of the show's pivotal pieces isn't even acknowledged in the list of works: it consists of five tiny items of haberdashery – a zipper, an earring, a couple of unidentified bits of jewellery and a gold heart – fixed directly to the wall. A ruled pencil line runs between them, connecting one to the other; all roads, however, lead to the heart, which is positioned to one side. It looks like a symbolic diagram.

The pleasurable problem of *A Stack of Black Pants* concerns the tightness of the formal and conceptual connections between its parts, and where we subsequently locate Ross-Ho herself in all this. Near to the work mentioned above is another wall drawing, this time smudged and with most of its nodes removed (only pinholes remain). 'Sincerely Sincerely' reads a scrawled note to one side. Is this a mantra or simply a jotted reminder?

The largest works in the exhibition are six white canvases with red calligraphic marks on them. They look like blown-up shopping lists or indecipherable 'notes to self'; titles such as *Correction #19 (23%)* or *Correction #50 (CCCC)* (both 1981–2010) hint that these are pieces of schoolwork, with everything but the teacher's marking erased. The dates of the paintings hint that the student may have been the thirty-five-year-old artist. *Triangle and Teak Reams* (2010) comprises oversize red acrylic geometry triangles and blocks of wood cut to the dimensions of a stack of US letter paper, arranged alongside a female mugshot cut from a newspaper and a jack-o'-lantern pendant. Empirical evaluation seems threatened in both works by chaos, breakdown and the loss of self.

At first glance, however, the exhibition coheres tidily. The colour red recurs in diverse works throughout, linking flagons of Carlo Rossi Blush wine to red Vans sneakers and a strawberry pincushion. Even the cutup press release (collaged from previous exhibitions) is colour-coordinated. It is hard to shake the sense that this neatness is somehow too controlled, even slightly pleased with itself. It is where sense breaks down that the work opens up: *Tragedy* (2010), a photograph of an egregiously taxidermied bobcat, hung opposite an enlarged advertisement for *Brown Coconuts* (2010). I have no idea why, but in their evasiveness, they hinted at something specific or private to the artist.

The work that gives the exhibition its title is pretty much what you'd expect, except that the pants in question have been meticulously rescaled to 300 percent. If the originals belonged to Ross-Ho, as seems likely, the work is a close-fitting metaphor for the way in which the artist's identity moves within the expanded forms of her deceptively casual practice.

Jonathan Griffin



A Stack of Black Pants,
2010, teak, black canvas,
thread, 86 x 117 x 91 cm.
Photo: Robert Wedemeyer.
Courtesy Cherry and
Martin, Los Angeles

| Europe |

Jochen Gerz *2-3 Streets*

Various venues, Ruhr Region
December 2009 – December 2010

On the very last day of December 2010, 78 artists and 'creative people' in three cities in the Ruhr packed their bags, computers, mugs, musical instruments and even, perhaps, paintbrushes as their live/work, life/art experiment – a yearlong project organised by artist Jochen Gerz – came to an end. *2-3 Streets* was an experiment that went very much against the 'event culture' that has dominated the Ruhr Metropolis – European Capital of Culture celebrations last year. Gerz, whose practice often involves working with local authorities, businesses, arts organisations and a cast of thousands, conceived this project in 2006. What if artists and other generally creative people were offered somewhere to live in exchange for regular writing and some sort of social engagement? Advertisements were placed offering housing in Dortmund, Duisburg and Mülheim. Although nearly 1,500 people applied from across Europe, the actual selection worked itself out. Many ultimately could not meet the demands – it is hard to change circumstances for one year only, to leave family, friends and accommodation elsewhere.

Rent for these newly floored flats in social housing was paid in words. Inhabitants were encouraged to submit any kind of writing, sending it unedited, via computer, to be collated in the project's main office, in Essen, by people who discarded only the equivalent of spoiled ballot papers, nothing else. Artists did not speak to each other about what they wrote, but an anonymous archive – a collective text of thousands of pages, representing real time – built up. This 'common but inaccessible and unknown text' (as a version of the work, currently on display at the new Folkwang Museum in Essen, is identified) will be published as a book this year.

In Dortmund, people were housed in flats in buildings built for steelworkers, with planned parks and schools. The (mainly) Turkish population living there now lacks any equivalent source of centralised employment. An address in these buildings can affect your credit rating. But what's new? The relation between poor areas and artistic production is well established. It has generally resulted in gentrification, but is this perhaps different? The public/private balance shifts in density from city to city, yet Gerz has enabled an extraordinary web of relationships and commitment between property companies, local authorities, artists and the public.

If *2-3 Streets* was different, it was because the obligation to write may have turned into a guilt-ridden process, with the 'big artist' often a figure of resentment. Gerz has in the past created situations which, in liberal moralistic terms, could be seen as punitive: employing the homeless to beg outside Notre Dame de Paris in the name of art, for instance. His insistence on sending the homeless back out into the streets at the end of the project caused uproar.

Encouraged to devise projects involving 'the main actors' – the people already living there – some of the volunteers felt panic and guilt about the amount they did, or the amount of writing they managed. This process seems very much like therapy, with the raw material, the 'rent' equivalent, lost in the ether. Some people admitted to a conflict between their own, perhaps 'selfish' practice as artists, and social engagement with others who were living there; yet the tower block in Duisburg, for example, now has a reading group among its residents, and decorations in the hall. Meanwhile, at the Folkwang Museum, between a Sean Scully painting and a piece by Atelier Van Lieshout, a huge screen – credited to Gerz – features text in German running continuously from bottom to top. On the accompanying label is written: 'They pay their rent with the words they write. Not to be viewed by public or authors till publication.' *Sacha Craddock*



2-3 Streets, Duisburg (2009-10).
Photo: Sabitha Saul



Victor Boulet

Brooding Parasite Feeding Week

Institute of Social Hypocrisy, Paris
1–8 November

When Norwegian artist Victor Boulet invited French curator Damien Airault to undertake a project at the artist's Institute of Social Hypocrisy, a second-floor project space in the Marais, Airault, as the novelistic cliché goes, 'didn't quite know what he was getting himself into'. Indeed, rather than exercising anything like creative agency – through, say, the organisation of an exhibition – the curator was requested to abdicate it entirely, along with his physical liberty.

For the space of exactly one week, from Monday 1 November at midday until the same hour on the following Monday, the curator was willingly (I quote) "incarcerated" inside the Institute. Like any good jailer, Boulet assumed full responsibility for the curator's nourishment, feeding him twice a day, precisely at midday and 6pm – and here's the twist – a meal invariably based on whale meat. (This is contraband in France; Boulet had to smuggle it into his adopted home country at his own risk.) However, lest the monotony of the exotic victual become too punishing, Boulet was sure to carefully and imaginatively prepare it differently each time, creating something of a gourmet menu that ranged from 'whale steak with wild fennel seeds and Tasmanian bush pepper with red-pepper sauce' to 'whale risotto with Valpolicella Amarone wine', to name but two examples. Granted access to the Internet and a telephone, Airault was allowed and encouraged to work and communicate with the outside world, but any communication between him and his servile captor was strictly forbidden – this despite the fact that meals were delivered by said captor via a basket dropped from the window twice daily. Meanwhile, in a final twist of the screw, Boulet, unbeknownst to Airault, went and impishly installed a photocopy-based work upon the windows of the curator's nearby not-for-profit space, Le Commissariat.

It is important to note that this project, entitled *Brooding Parasite Feeding Week*, took place within the context of Boulet's eccentric, deliberately limited, two-year-lifespan project space. Conceived by the artist as an ongoing work of art in itself, the space invites other artists and curators to reflect upon hypocrisy in one form or another (some notable participants include Merlin Carpenter and Oliver Laric). As such, *BPFW* was a work within a larger work of a relatively ambiguous albeit fluid nature, which ultimately seeks to transparently demarcate the shifty ethical parameters that underpin a fair amount of what goes on in the artworld. At once a social experiment, a personal challenge (on the part of both the artist and the curator), an allegorical reflection upon the contract between artist and curator and a so-called reversal of the power relations between the two, *BPFW* actively – as opposed to theoretically – offered a rich and investigative commentary upon the current artist–curator power struggle discourse. Literally and symbolically, it explored the extent to which the two activities are interrelated: indeed, who exactly was the parasite and who was the host here?

Such a reflection, however, should not lead one to believe that this was only a question of perversely illustrating a mutual dependency. As demonstrated by its *jusqu'à bout* logic, it was too twisted for that. Nor was it punitive. It was ameliorative. The artist himself said, in conversation: "I want to make him a better person, a better curator". Whether or not it worked is, of course, something that only time will tell. But many would argue that there is room for such a procedure on curatorial syllabi everywhere (preemptive amelioration?), and they might not be wrong. *Chris Sharp*

Brooding Parasite Feeding Week: Day 3, 12:00, the curator pulling up his basket receiving a whalemeat chili omelette with rice salad, 2010

Freighted with heady texts – catalogue, exhibition guide, takeaway broadsheets and wall-mounted statements – Manifesta 8 is framed by high-minded queries into European identity and the interplay between political, social and cultural constructs. But rather than just revisiting today's clichéd explorations of the mechanisms of power (although there is plenty of that), each of the three curatorial teams responsible for one of the three exhibitions which comprise this iteration of Manifesta – Alexandria Contemporary Arts Forum, Chamber of Public Secrets and tranzit.org – attempts to frame new, more open-ended ways of understanding the conflicts and conundrums inherent in governance, immigration and incarceration, among other hot-button issues. These efforts are, in turn, meant to constitute 'a shared space of concept and engagement', to quote the catalogue.

Such goals seem laudable. And to the extent that projects like Nada Prlja's *Foreign Language for Beginners* (2010) – a film actually shot by prisoners in local jails without the artist's presence – engage discarded communities and result in work that evokes empathy and a sense of shared social investment, then, at least for me, they succeed. But while each of the three curatorial models aims for freedom and possibility, all come with a set of theoretical constructs, and given the preponderance of collaborative efforts, of artists working with archival material and of projects conceived as discussions or insertions in local media, it is the discursive that dominates.

At its most informative – as in Mathieu Kleyebe Abonnenc's installation of archival material from *Tricontinental*, a 1960s anti-imperialist leftist journal which here serves to contextualise Sarah Maldoror's politically sharp and visually gorgeous film *Monangambée* (1969) – work at Manifesta introduces a model of the interface between art and politics while indicting the lack of engagement in most contemporary art. In contrast, there is *Backbench* (2010), an installation of opposed bleacherlike platforms that was the site, last summer, of a three-day discussion between four collectives and two curators 'on issues including the condition of art criticism today, activism in collective practices, and the instrumentalisation of contemporary art'. The exchange was filmed; an edited version is presented as a multichannel video piece. The benches were designed, apparently, to recall British parliamentary forums. Kill me now.

Many of the themes treated in the shows, such as migration, colonialism and the multiethnic history of the host region, are meant to inform a 'dialogue with North Africa'. However, this seems to take place mostly among European artists, and by the application of a priori constructs. By my count there are only eight artists from the Maghreb and Egypt (ACAF, of course, is based in Alexandria). In reaction to the apparent passing attention and meagre resources devoted to this dialogue, Thierry Geoffroy set aside a space plastered with scrawled and satirical notes, inviting pop-up inclusions by North African artists and asking the public for the loan of video monitors.

The failure of Manifesta's signature theme is emblematic of its broader failure to coalesce into a coherent exhibition. This diffuseness derives, it seems, from placing ideas ahead of art. Then there is the problem of overlapping three ostensibly sympathetic but theoretically top-heavy shows, each mounted in multiple venues in two cities, in hopes of achieving synergistic resonances. It's a simple case of too many cooks. *Joshua Mack*



Manifesta 8

Various venues, Murcia and Cartagena
9 October – 9 January

Artillery Barracks, Pavilion 1,
Murcia (tranzit.org) – Manifesta
8: Tris Vonna-Michell, *Balustrade*
(Balaustrada), 2010. Photo: Ilya
Rabinovich

Laura Buckley

Waterlilies

Mother's Tankstation, Dublin
3 November – 11 December

Just as technology of sufficient sophistication is indistinguishable from magic, art that addresses the functioning of the senses risks being confused with a bit of a lark. But in the same way that it's rather obtuse to imagine that Olafur Eliasson offers only upscale *son et lumière*, those encountering Laura Buckley's work would be missing something if they were entirely distracted by pleasure. The Galway-born artist's work – here in the form of *Waterlilies*, an extraordinary phenomenotechnic roomful of acid colours, gliding images and spinning shapes – is experiential in such a way as seemingly to negate critical approaches that try to do other than point out what any child can clearly see. To engage on another front can seem akin to directing our discussion of a baroque fountain to an examination of its plumbing, or of a Jenny Holzer sign to its wiring.

Wiring is something that, all the same, can't really be beside the point, since like other Mother's Tankstation alums, such as Nina Canell, Buckley is enamoured of the white extension socket and attendant fettuccine of wires. All are needed to power a writhing floorful of projectors and rotating plinths. The latter are topped mostly with simple flat sheets of coloured Perspex cut into asymmetrical shapes, but occasionally also by more complex little architectural forms of mirrored plastic, they too revolving on their little turntables. Onto this floor piece are focused three projectors, each showing a different image: whether simple CMYK screensavers or little glimpses of urban wonders and domestic monuments. As the light from these projectors hits the rotating floor ensemble, its images are reflected and refracted, spun, twisted, recolourised, shrunk, squeezed and inflated by the superficially chaotic interaction of reflection on reflection, refraction on refraction, scudding off around the space like pebbles skipped across a lake.

Here, then, Buckley addresses the operation of the senses (primarily the eyes but also the ears, and the occult interaction of vision and hearing) in a manner that recalls James Turrell's seeking out of areas where they fail to work as expected. And in that collapse, we're encouraged – ever so gently and politely – to confront some of the most challenging aspects of our subjective constitution. Behind such philosophical (and in Turrell's case, even religious) investigations, there are always the phenomena of light and sound, the patterns of maths, of physics, which threaten to engage us on other levels, not easily accounted for.

Buckley is exploring, too, some of the instability that Anthony McCall uncovered when hovering in the territories between cinema and sculpture, solid objects and things conjured with weightless light. Her content, however, moves beyond light itself, towards domestic scenes and sounds, drips of water and chunks of rock, leaving her work closer to cinema than McCall's minimalist prestidigitations and their determined refusal of film's capabilities to reference an 'elsewhere'. But in its extreme mobility, its frantic engagement with both the space in which it

is projected and with the individual's attention, Buckley's art is here a useful distance further from the familiar experience of the screen audience with its neutralised bodies. Certainly Buckley is a sculptor of light, as McCall envisaged, but she is also, crucially, a sculptor of attention. If only this show were as big as the Turbine Hall: now that would be a lark. *Luke Clancy*

Oblique Horizons (detail),
2010, Perspex, 25 motors,
4-channel video projection,
audio, dimensions variable.
Courtesy the artist and
Mother's Tankstation, Dublin



'[T]ired from having polished for hours my Rolls Royce made of pink marble from Portugal, I sat down and began to daydream [...] I unconsciously chewed my chewing gum. Pulling these odd shapes out of my mouth I suddenly realized what an extraordinary collection of abstract sculptures was passing through my teeth.' Sly and sincere, Alina Szapocznikow's typed text outlines the origins of her seminal *Photosculpture* (1971). Comprising 21 black-and-white images of chewed gum affixed to minute shelves, the series is as inspired and droll as the revelation that begat it. The witty images brim with moody chiaroscuro, while the pale, tactile gum variously mimes Eva Hesse's droopy membranes, the tortured figuration of a Francis Bacon subject or a naked female model, limp and luminous against the most minimal of fainting couches.

Scrolling in an even horizon line across one of the Migros Museum's walls, Szapocznikow's series serves as a kind of backbone for *Une Idée, une Forme, un Être – Poésie / Politique du Corporel*. Along with the late Polish artist, the show features recent works by eight international artists that conjure a similarly postsurrealist corporeal sensuality and political residue, while employing minimalist mores like seriality and the reduction of form. Yet if the trace of the absent yet politicised and messy body is the ongoing theme here, it manifests itself in spare, tidy sculptural arrangements or lovely two-dimensional works in series – the cleanest and most tasteful of relics.

Thus Ai Weiwei's *Colored Vases* (2006) – rust-red, lemon-yellow, sky-blue – classically arranged atop a pale pedestal at the gallery's centre. More than 5,000 years old, the Neolithic pots are stained with industrial paints. The gesture is profane but the result is weirdly moving: both violation and caress. Nearby, Martin Soto Climent's *echt* erotic manipulated found objects, dating from the last two years – eyeglass cases with their silk interiors pulled out like salacious tongues, a white plinth bifurcated with blue pantyhose – are strewn carefully along the floor. The components of Regina José Galindo's *La Conquista* (2009), meanwhile, rise like beacons: two tall white poles, each hung with a wig of dark hair. The walls in turn are studded with Pamela Rosenkranz's photograms of bright, tiny pills, glowing against their dark fields like eyes emerging from the void, and Eftihis Patsourakis's gorgeous *Curtain 3* series (2009), a riot of 1980s-inflected

neon paint sprayed atop paper separators gleaned from old photo albums.

This dismantling and distributing of the human form – Galindo's scalps, Rosencranz's eyes, Climent's tongues – ably conjures Szapocznikow's campy sense of the body as a site of both the horrific and the humorous. Less cogent is the attempt to create a common ground of political necessity among the works. Szapocznikow's personal history – concentration camp survivor, cancer victim – does indeed shadow her work, yet it is difficult to discern its commonality with the other political gestures on view (Galindo's critique of violence against women) and not (Ai Weiwei's recent arrest by the Chinese authorities). Yet despite this, and a slight aftertaste of almost too much tastefulness in the curatorial selection, the exhibition is a discerning delineation of works that sit in that long shadow paradoxically cast by the ever-elusive, always departing material body.

Quinn Latimer

Une Idée, une Forme, un Être – Poésie / Migros Museum, Zurich
Politique du Corporel 25 September – 28 November



Une Idée, une Forme, un Être – Poésie / Politique du Corporel, 2010 (installation view). Photo: A. Burger. Courtesy Migros Museum, Zurich

In 1935, Alberto Giacometti went back to sculpting from live models after a decade under the spell of Surrealism. His ex-comrades perceived this 'retrograde' move as a surrender to representation, and turned their backs on him. Giacometti explained that he was looking not for lifelike renderings but for archetypes of humanity and, after 12 years of struggle, in the mid-1940s finally released his signature elongated male and female figures. The largest of them all were the four bronzes (almost 3m high) of the series *Grande Femme Debout*, commissioned in 1960 for the public plaza of the new Chase Manhattan Bank skyscraper in Lower Manhattan. Talking about them to the critic David Sylvester, Giacometti said: 'I should be interested to discover the maximum height that I could do by hand. Well, maximum height, that's precisely what the tall women are. They're already almost beyond all possibility, and in that case we're talking about something completely imaginary.'

Imagination, icons and archetypes are such stuff as John Baldessari's art is made on – like fashion, in fact. So when asked by Fondazione Prada director Germano Celant to think of a project for the cavernous postindustrial, Rem Koolhaas-designed space that alternately hosts the contemporary art exhibitions of the foundation and the glamorous catwalks of the brand, the artist decided to turn the *Grandes Femmes* into hilarious mannequins in bronzelike resin, and to stretch even further their vertical challenge, up to 4.5m. 'I've always wanted to do tall paintings and sculptures. I suspect it's because I'm quite tall', he writes in the press notes, with his usual deadpan humour; but also adds: 'To extend an extreme existing idea to its logical conclusion has been a working method for me'. In the past, Baldessari has summed up his *modus operandi* with another magic formula: 'As soon as you put two things together, you get a story', somehow paraphrasing Breton's praise, in his Surrealist Manifesto, of 'certain forms of previously neglected associations'. If nowadays art and fashion are hardly the equivalent of an umbrella and a sewing machine, Baldessari's version of their chance meeting is nonetheless good fun. Instead of advocating any demarcation, he plays with tautology and borrows directly from the fashion store to make 'art arise from art', as he declares. And he makes the most of the occasion to carry on his recent adventures in three-dimensional space, like the giant sculpture *Brain/Cloud* or the tableau vivant *Ear Sofa Nose Sconces with Flowers (in Stage Setting)*, both from 2009, and presented, respectively, at Tate Modern and Sprüth Magers in London that year.

Cleverly exploiting the bulky row of columns that bisects the Fondazione Prada space, Baldessari echoes the scheme of a *défilé* by lining up nine 'top models'. The sculptures are clothed with different garments of his own creation – 18 'outfits' in total, whose sequence and assortment changed twice during the exhibition, as if on a runway – transforming Prada's 'temple of style' into a giant dollhouse. Here comes a Rapunzel with her blonde braids, a bride in white, a Scarlett O'Hara in petticoat and balloon skirt, a cowgirl, a King Kong-esse with tiny aeroplanes around her head, a cerebral Joan of Arc with prêt-à-porter bales of hay for her pyre, a Dorothy and her giant ruby slipper, a *matadora* in pink and red, a luxury traveller, an Ingrid Bergman-in-*Casablanca* with a Bogart trench and so on: a condensed catalogue of marketable 'iconic women'. True to the fashion system, Baldessari provided the idea and some drawings, while couture and manufacture were all 'made in Italy'. The overall effect is awkward and amusing, kitsch and chic, although the artist denies pursuing parody. 'My idea', he candidly states, 'is only to comment on our culture'.

Barbara Casavecchia



John Baldessari *The Giacometti Variations*

Fondazione Prada, Milan
29 October – 26 December

The Giacometti Variations (detail), 2010.
Photo: Roberto Marossi. Courtesy the artist
and Fondazione Prada, Milan

I HATE SAN FRANCISCO. I say this now because I am about to review a book about the city, but I hasten to qualify that rare antipathy by stating that I grew up there (Bay Area). What is more, I always find myself solipsistically, and perhaps a little puerilely shocked when people do not confess to loathing wherever it is they grew up. Go figure. So if that qualification does not sufficiently expose and invalidate the utterly subjective and perfectly pathological nature of my antipathy, then perhaps the following review will lend it some credence. Or maybe not.

For the record, I agreed to review *Infinite City* in hopes of, if not being divested of that antipathy, then at least seeing it diminished; I'm sorry to say that this has not been the case. On the contrary, reading this atlas, for better or for worse, has merely given it a new, more lucid lease on life. But why this apparent grudge? In addition to the liberal, quasi-procrustean intolerance that dogs the place, perhaps the American poet John Ashbery put it best when he remarked how everyone is 'constantly patting themselves on the back for living there'. 'There' being California, but of nowhere in the state does this seem more true than San Francisco.

The offspring of a proposal by the San Francisco MOMA to celebrate its 75th anniversary in 2010, Rebecca Solnit's *Infinite City* comprises 22 unorthodox maps conceived by invited artists, and almost as many corresponding reflections penned by herself and other invited writers. Self-consciously subjective, the atlas, and its high-spirited tone, are of a categorically panegyric order: this is a book about San Francisco by people who love San Francisco (so if you love San Francisco, maybe this is the book for you). Topographical themes range from 'Green Women: Open Spaces and Their Champions' to 'Cinema City: Muybridge Inventing Movies, Hitchcock Making *Vertigo*' and from 'Monarchs and Queens: Butterfly Habitats and Queer Public Spaces' to 'The World in a Cup: Coffee Economics and Ecologies'. There is, however, plenty of trouble in paradise, and Solnit dedicates a fair number of occasionally winsome chapters to San Francisco's more irrepressible and sprawling blemishes. 'The Smell of Ten Thousand Gallons of Mayonnaise and a Hundred Tons of Coffee', written by Chris Carlsson, and 'The Mission: North of Home, South of Safe', by Adriana Camarena, reflect, respectively, upon the shifting and beleaguered landscape of the food industry in San Francisco and the decidedly dire situation of gang life in



Infinite City: A San Francisco Atlas

By Rebecca Solnit

University of California Press, £16.95/\$24.95 (softcover)

the city's famous Mission district; they are the only texts in the atlas that manage to sincerely shrug off the intractable cheerfulness and optimism that trills throughout the majority of the book. 'Right Wing of the Dove: The Bay Area as Conservative/Military Brain Trust' is written by Solnit herself, and it informatively maps out the extensive presence of the American military in the region. ('We [the Bay Area] are the brain of the war machine, or perhaps its imagination', she writes). And although the chapter is marked by an equanimous will to embrace this aspect of the Bay Area, that will, by virtue of its mere existence, in turn belies a sanctimonious tolerance and underlying indignation at the thought that Arcadia should harbour such demons. As if what was intolerable was not the fact that such demons exist, but that they exist in the Bay Area – and that the Sunday services would otherwise be perfect if that belligerently belching drunk would simply remove himself from the building.

I'm sorry to say that it was implicit beliefs such as these that ultimately prevented San Francisco from soaring into the ether of allegory, but on the contrary ensured that the city and its environs were never anything more than themselves, entrenched in their halcyon corner of the world. *Chris Sharp*



CHELSEA, NEW YORK, 2003. Art, writes John Kelsey, was functioning perfectly. Which was exactly the problem with it. Money and art had 'once again decided to quit fooling around and shack up'. The bourgeois ceremony of gallery dinners was 'streamlined and hastily translated into brute acts of business'. You don't have to get very far in these collected writings of Kelsey (who as a magazine editor, member of Bernadette Corporation and founder of Reena Spaulings might run with the byline: artist, writer, curator, whatever) to appreciate that his interests lie in art that sputters and clanks: the once-well-oiled machine that suddenly begins to reach the point of breakdown. The artists Kelsey focuses on are those who have examined this smartly functioning machine of art in 2003 to understand its workings, and then pushed its capabilities to excess. He thinks there's too much stuff in Rachel Harrison's sculptures – the objects and images she uses become one and the same; nothing is privileged over anything else. Richard Prince tells the same

Rich Texts: Selected Writing for Art

By John Kelsey
Sternberg, €15/\$19.95 (softcover)

jokes over and over again, like a broken record, until the act of making a joke seems desperate, bizarre. Christopher Williams injects a disturbance into an otherwise perfect photograph that causes the whole image to come undone a little. Though wide in scope, the subjects Kelsey touches on spin around the central axis of the broken system. Painting is worked over by computers, printers and scanners in the works of Kelley Walker and Wade Guyton; systems lose their heads in his discussions of decapitation in the work of Seth Price, of the heads on coins, Fra Angelico's *Beheading of Saint Cosmas and Saint Damian* (1438) and the giant head of the Red Queen in Tim Burton's *3D Alice in Wonderland* (2010).

There are three words that recur with surprising regularity in *Rich Texts*, and those are 'stutter', 'stammer' and 'strike'. An alternative name for the collection might have been *St-st-stutter*. Indeed, there's a little joke in the introduction about the fact that Kelsey originally planned to call the collection *Texte zur Kunts*, but realised that the joke didn't work in Germany, and not really in America either. One senses, however, that the reason the anecdote is still in the book is that a nonperforming joke is of as much interest to Kelsey as one that works. And that, furthermore, if the title had worked too neatly, he would have probably abandoned it anyway.

Kelsey's constant switching of roles has contributed to an authorial voice that is oddly blank, airless and authoritative (though the content itself is not), and as such, he only just escapes coming off as a smoothly operating machine himself. As if to ensure that the book has its own stutters, the collection is peppered with photographic images of female tennis players midmatch, as though to remind the reader of some kind of physical perfection of body, movement and emotion that is untranslatable via the textual form. Form and translation are also at play in the title Kelsey finally settled on, and its allusions to rich-text word processing. Rich text, as opposed to plain text, allows for luxuries like bold and italic. Its wealth lies in its appearance; format is the currency of our time.

And yet, much as this is the subject of Kelsey's collection, *Rich Texts* is also a memoir of America in the decade after 9/11, a point made clear with the inclusion of Kelsey's 'Top 10' from a 2005 *Artforum* (1. Hurricane Katrina) and several pieces that discuss memories of this uncertain decade. America, in fact, is the real subject here, and what's more, it's Kelsey's broken machine *ne plus ultra*. Is it any comfort at all to him that this country in its death throes will likely provide him with the perfect material? *Laura McLean-Ferris*

SPOILER ALERT: the mother of Jed Martin, the protagonist of Michel Houellebecq's latest novel, committed suicide when Jed was seven. His father, a follower of socialist utopians Charles Fourier and William Morris, dreamed of liberating society from the imprisoning architectural visions of Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe. Instead he develops spa resorts. Decades later he retires, becomes ill, requires an artificial anus and has himself euthanised in a Swiss clinic. Jed, meanwhile, has become an artist. After his first photo exhibition, *ArtPrice* ranks him 17th among French artists and 583rd in the world. A decade later, in 2016, having drifted off the *ArtPrice* chart and abandoned the camera for the brush, he does a portrait of Michel Houellebecq in exchange for a catalogue essay. The world's richest collectors vie for works at his opening — François Pinault, Roman Abramovich and Carlos Slim Helú among them. Steve Jobs pays €1.5 million for Jed's *chef d'oeuvre*, *Bill Gates and Steve Jobs Discuss the Future of Computing*; the other 21 paintings sell for an average price of €900,000. Three months later, *Michel Houellebecq, Writer* disappears, the theft connected to a grisly double-murder. It resurfaces three years after that and sells for €6m. Jed, already a recluse and increasingly unresponsive to psychological and physical stimuli, leaves Paris and spends the remaining 30 years of his life creating 'videogrammes' — footage of electronic components, Playmobil figures and people he has known, superimposed on footage of vegetation. The superimposed elements break down or are artificially accelerated along this path with sulphuric acid. 'This is undoubtedly the most successful attempt in Western art to represent the vegetal view of the world', says the narrator. In a 40-page interview in *ArtPress*, the artist, now senile, mumbles repeatedly, 'I want to realise the world'.

La Carte et le Territoire

By Michel Houellebecq
Flammarion, €22 (softcover)

And that ain't the half of it. Houellebecq covers more ground in 428 pages than Balzac did in a lifetime. Equal parts police procedural, science fiction and deadpan-funny neo-realism, the book's main subjects are France and death, or rather, the perishable and transitory nature of all human industry — but especially French. Yet from the first line ('Jeff Koons had just risen from his seat, his arms thrown forward in a burst of enthusiasm'), the artworld is the focalising prism. The projected image, however, is so ridiculous as to be unrecognisable. In his acknowledgments, Houellebecq writes that he does little research 'compared to an American writer. But in this case I was impressed and intrigued by the police, and it seems to me necessary to do a bit more.' The machinations of the contemporary art market were obviously less intriguing, despite their centrality to the plot. Jed's rise to seven-figure sales is patently absurd — but then so, some would argue, Houellebecq most certainly among them, were those of Koons and Damien Hirst, the only two contemporary artists mentioned in the novel.

None of this, of course, matters; in Houellebecq's universe, little does any more. The first novel to appropriate Wikipedia entries and win a major literary prize (Prix Goncourt 2010), *La Carte et le Territoire* is a coyly conceived puzzle book, Joycean in scope, but probably more indebted to French novelist Georges Perec's constraint-driven 'story-making machines'. Houellebecq's pages, however, seem fuelled by what his protagonist calls 'impulsions of the moment': digressions beget digressions, ideas topple out of ideas. The result, a portrait (of a portrait) of the artist as an artificial anus lost in a dystopian world of second-rate celebrity, bad plumbing, low-cost air travel and frozen lasagne, is one of the richest panoramas in contemporary fiction. As a send-up of the artworld it is a bit thin, but as a portrayal of the death of the author, the deterritorialisation of identity, the disintegration of culture and the general disembowelment of everything, it is genuinely profound. *Christopher Mooney*

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Jr. | foreword by Lawrer

IT IS IN THE CHAPTER concerning the historic precedents for Wikipedia, the online open-access encyclopaedia, that it becomes apparent why the author of this introspective study – and indeed the thousands of (often anonymous) people around the world who invest time updating the website without payment – seem to care so much about a reference tool often criticised for its subjectivity and inaccuracies. Reagle cites H.G. Wells's early-twentieth-century concept of a slightly creepy 'world brain' as being a forerunner to Wikipedia's ongoing utopian aims, specifically in the manner in which both call for an all-encompassing documentation of the world such that, as Wells put it, 'the wide world would write its history, as the fabric of destiny flowed on'. Wikipedia presents knowledge as agreed rather than asserted (and thus as contingent rather than necessary), decentralised and democratic through the forum of online discussion. It is a socialist conception of history, akin to the historiography of folk tradition, in which a narrative is derived through the dialogue of nonexperts.

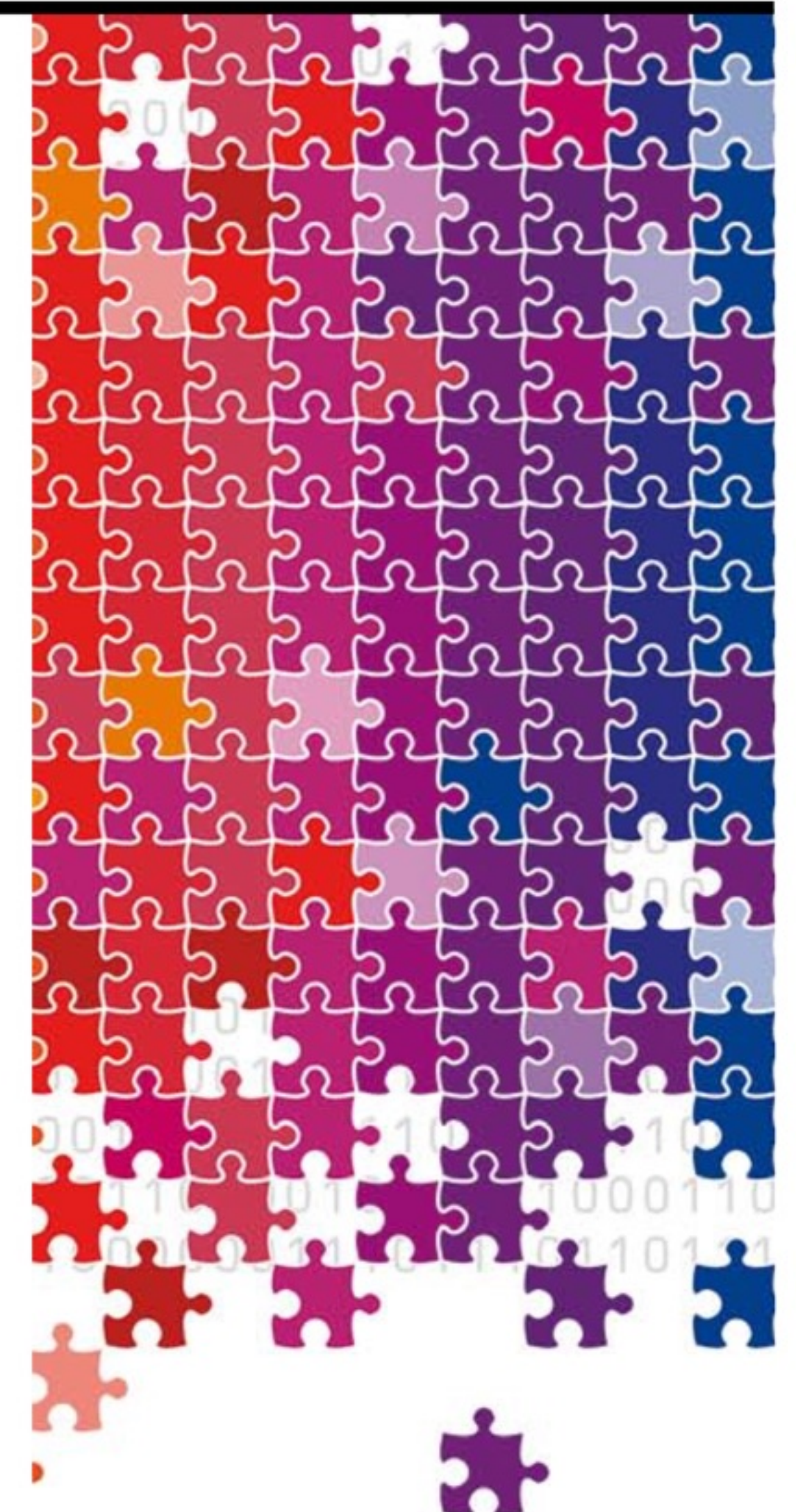
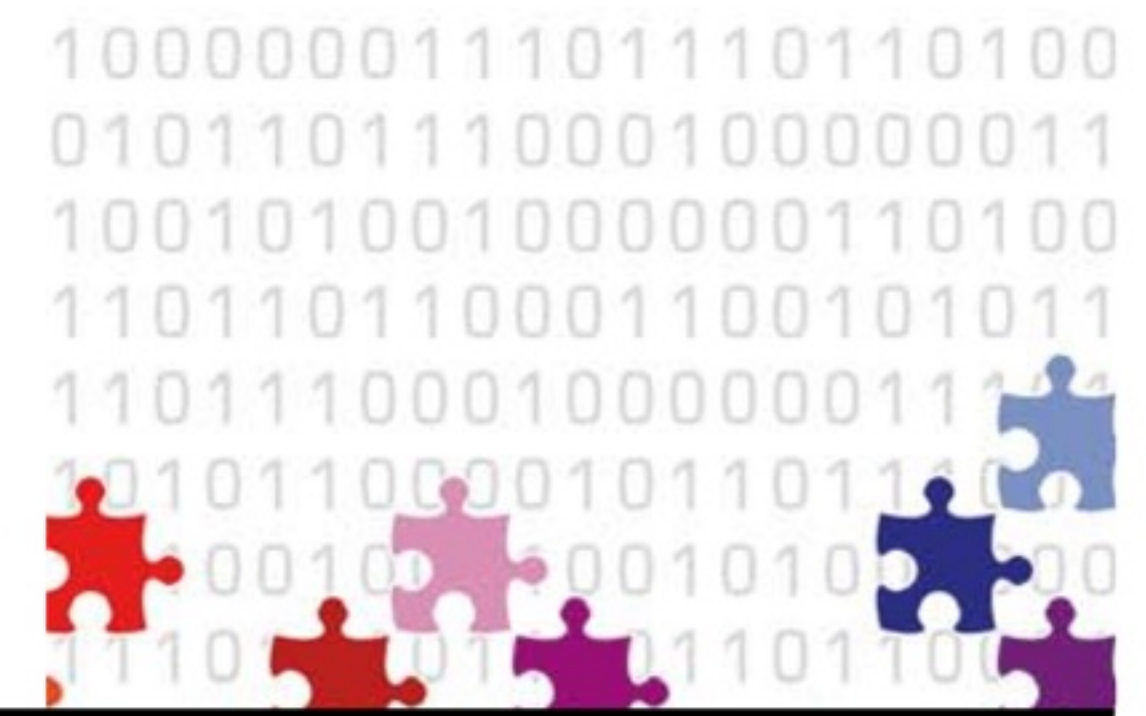
Buffering the utopian ideals outlined by Reagle are some more-painful stretches of text in which the author gets into far too much detail about the prosaic bureaucracy played out through the website's contributor forums. Reagle's lengthy discussion on the classification system of the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* television series, spin-off games, soundtracks, books and film (whether each should have a separate entry, and furthermore, whether every episode merits an independent page) consumed a good 20 minutes of my life that I won't get back. It feels like Reagle gets too close to his subject matter, and though he never lets up on his academic prose style – the book started life as a postgraduate research project – he obviously has a real affinity to the internal arguments over the shape and deployment of Wikipedia, detailed here sadly at the expense of the wider significance of what has been one the most proactive forms Web 2.0 has evolved.

Good Faith Collaboration: The Culture of Wikipedia

By Joseph Michael Reagle Jr.
MIT Press, £20.95 (hardcover)

Larry Sanger and Jimmy Wales founded Wikipedia in 2001 from Nupedia, an online encyclopaedia in which the entries were written and verified by experts going through standard peer-review protocols. The use of a 'wiki' – a term for technology that allows external access to the editing of a website – was later incorporated to speed up the expansion of Nupedia's encyclopaedic aims. From this, Wikipedia as we know it gradually emerged. As a consequence of this collaborative mode of production, forums were created, in order that contributors could discuss differences of opinion over entries made by others. Despite the constant argument to be found within these, the website's endeavours offer an optimistic case study of successful collaborative effort – Reagle is so impressed by this facet that he starts his book with an anecdote on the discussion held between self-identified white supremacists and the wider contributor community over the proposed deletion of an entry concerning so-called Jewish ethnocentrism, which, amazingly, remained cordial; debating the incendiary subject in the terms of creating an encyclopaedia only, not the wrongs of the subject per se.

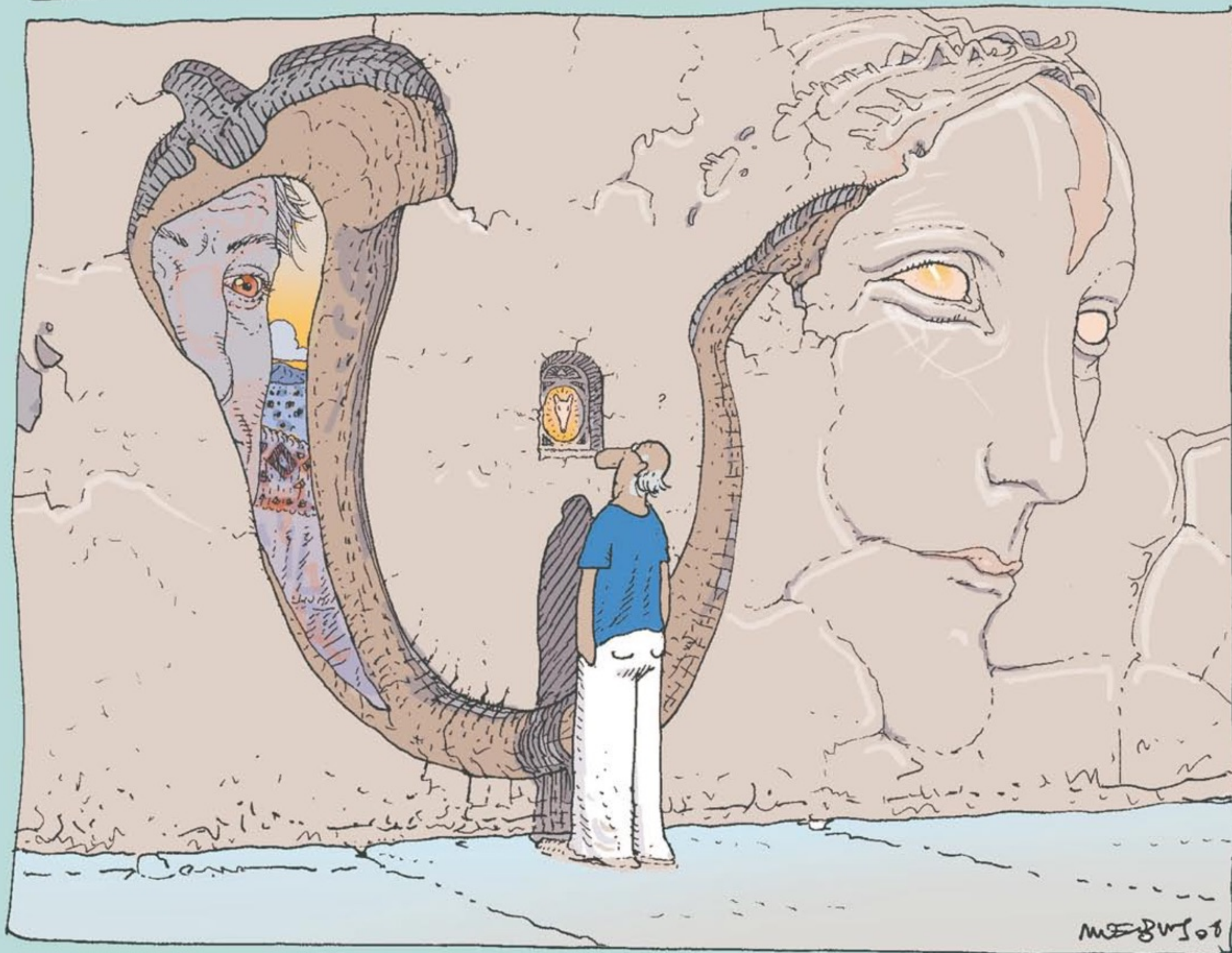
For all its faults, and this is where I would have liked Reagle to stray beyond the confines of ethnography, Wikipedia has become one of the primary means of finding knowledge, even if that knowledge comes with a question mark over its exact veracity (the article on Jewish ethnocentrism, for instance, was up on the site for a period of time prior to its eventual removal). Arguably it marks a shift – for better or worse – in how we make our historical narratives, from history as the encounter with material evidence to history as a form of perspective built from consensus, an echo of Derrida's note on language moving from the written to the vocalised, in which he foresaw 'a new mutation... history as writing', in which Wikipedia has become both a history of written discussion between a great mass of people and the written discussion of those people itself. *Oliver Basciano*



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NAUSICLA & MOEBIUS



MOEBIUS



ON THE TOWN:

11 November

House of Voltaire, London

24 November

Hilary Lloyd, Raven Row, London

photography IAN PIERCE and MARIE-FLEUR CHARLESWORTH

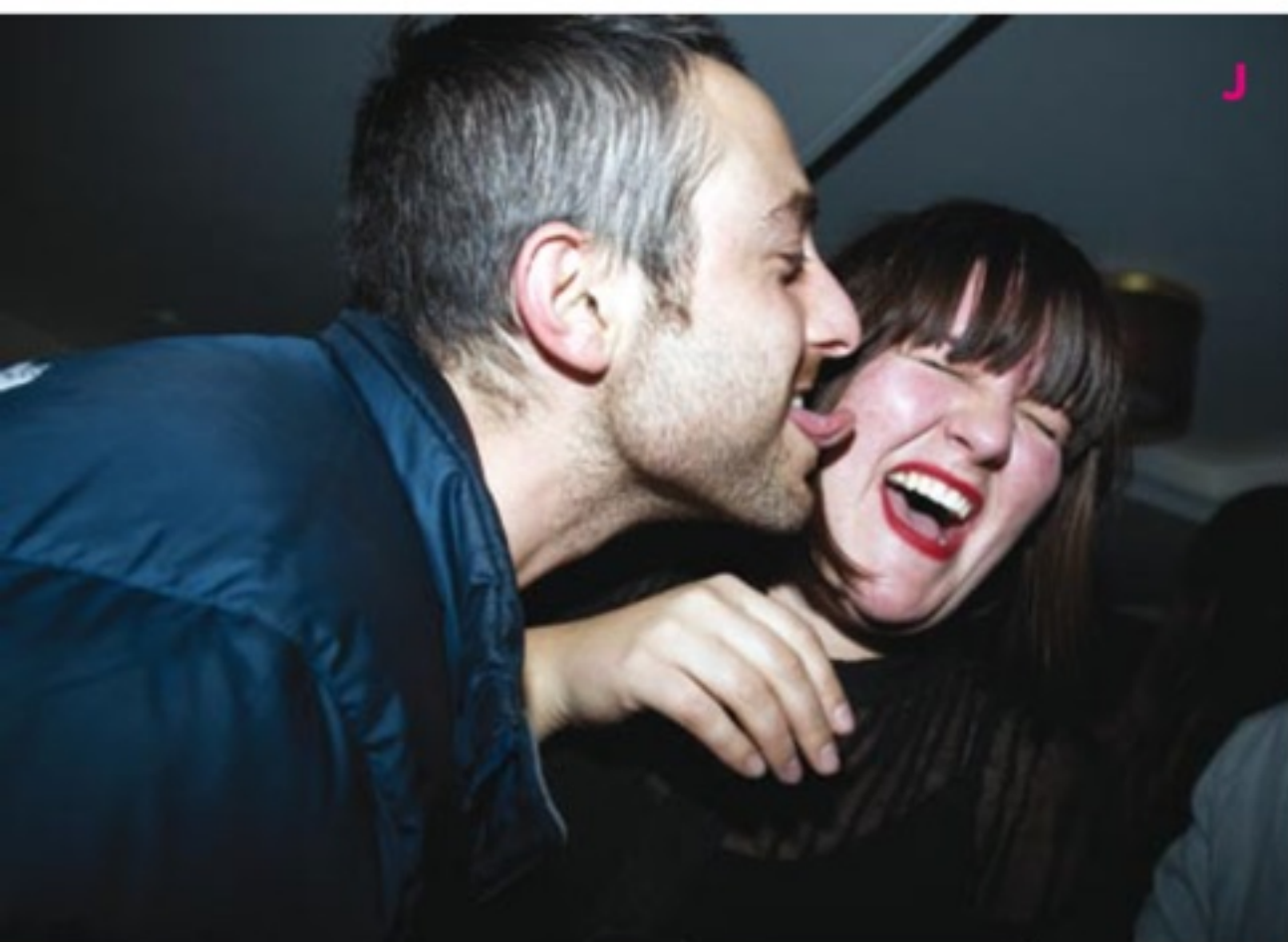


HILARY LLOYD

- 1 Artists James Pyman and Dexter Dalwood
- 2 Chisenhale Gallery's Polly Staple
- 3 Artist Giles Round
- 4 Artist Jemima Stehli
- 5 Raven Row's Alex Sainsbury
- 6 Artist Bettina Buck
- 7 Scott Weaver, Hilary Lloyd and artist Shahryar Nasat
- 8 Curator Stefano Collicelli Cagol, artist Hannah Rickards and writer Gil Leung
- 9 Designer Simon Josebury and artist Silke Otto-Knapp
- 10 The Approach's Emma Robertson
- 11 Artist Amikam Toren

HOUSE OF VOLTAIRE

- A Writer Charlie Porter
- B Collectors Valeria Napoleone (left) and Stefania Pramma (right) with Studio Voltaire's Joe Scotland and friend
- C Gallerist Stuart Shave
- D Artists Jane Simpson, Francis Upritchard and Fiona Banner
- E Outset's Candida Gertler
- F Writer Francesca Gavin, artist Joel Crosson & gallerist Rob Tufnell
- G Gallerist Carl Freedman
- H Hauser & Wirth's Sara Harrison and artists Nicholas Byrne and Anthea Hamilton
- I Artists George Henry Longly and Matthew Smith, and gallerist Kate McGarry
- J Artist Pablo Bronstein and Frieze Projects's Sarah McCrory
- K Artangel's Cressida Hubbard
- L Designer Martino Gamper
- M Sadies Coles's Pauline Daly
- N Actor Russell Tovey and musician Robert Diamant
- O Phillips de Pury's Brent Dzekciorius and Wallpaper's Sarah Douglas
- P Carmody Groarke's Kevin Carmody, and APFEL's Emma Thomas and Kirsty Carter



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Subject: off the record
Date: Friday, December 31, 2010 15:15
From: gallerygirl@artreview.com
To: <office@artreview.com>
Conversation: off the record

A new year, a new dawn! Except of course if you're reading this locked in the toilets at a house party in Dalston, where your meow meow-fuelled New Year's Eve celebrations have turned into vivid yet ultimately terrifying flashbacks to Documenta 11. In which case it will be more of an old dawn played over and over again in 16mm format until you awaken with the mirror you held up to reality irretrievably cracked, and having torn your Erdem maxi dress to pieces in order to staunch the tears. This is the time of year when the editorial team over at ArtReview Towers looks up from the 72-hour participatory art event that is the magazine's Christmas party, featuring strippers, jugglers, underpaid freelance writers and other leftover groups from Jeremy Deller's parades who'd been promised 'another gig', and asks me my thoughts about trends and forecasts for the coming year.

My first hot tip is that lots of small, intellectually worthy yet chronically underfunded public spaces will close their draughty galleries and instead open up groovy, fantastic and in all honesty incredibly gay pop-up shops in Central London. This is exactly what Studio Voltaire did in the pre-Christmas period with their fantastic House of Voltaire on Bruton Place. Brilliantly, they chucked out all the proper art and brought in loads of random T-shirts, editions and general tat that sold by the bucketful. And even better, they persuaded underworked employees of the art, fashion and culinary worlds to man the tills while management 'reinvested' the proceeds. This, I predict, is the future of all such art places. I foresee a Whitechapel pop-up trading off its intellectual rigour, a Serpentine pop-up trading off its super-slick, super-contemporary-with-chunks-of-art-history-tossed-in vibe and the ICA doing a pop-up which goes bust after three days, with tears, lots of shouting and denunciations, and, due to the sudden accounting shortfall, staff fleeing via the toilet window, their pockets stuffed with stationery and unsold copies of *Afterall*.

My second, longer-term hot tip is the eradication of working-class artists and their replacement by lovely Sloaney artists producing neo-expressionist daubings. Faced with the exorbitant fees being charged for degree subjects deemed superfluous by our blessed rulers, the future Mark Leckeyes, with their quaint and indecipherable accents from the north, will disappear. And in their place we'll have lots of toffs who went off the rails sniffing glue at Marlborough College and were sent to art school as punishment. They'll all have terrifying faces like Sam Cameron's, not so much frightening the horses as making them coo in loving recognition, and claim to have once hung out with trip-hop stars some time in the 1990s.

My third hot tip features mobs of the 'squeezed middle' throwing down their H&M scarves to flush out those bright, cheery curators and tell them that their lives have no place in our Big Society. Instead of cluttering up that strange oyster bar in Stansted Airport, in their sweet Dolce & Gabbana satin-trim cardigans on their way to the latest biennial, they'll be hounded by the baying middle-classes, who have just realised that they've been funding said curators' life-changing trips to Manifesta all this time. Turfed out of the oyster bar (which will then be ceremonially torched, though not before the Maldons are snaffled), the curators will all be sent to Ireland as punishment, which by this time will be nothing but peat bogs, secondhand paperback copies of Seamus Heaney's *Collected Poems* and Ryanair airports built 50 miles from the nearest settlement.

My fourth hot tip is that the whole auction merry-go-round will be simplified by everyone agreeing solely to sell or buy Warhols. Warhols will become the virtual currency of the super-rich, who will be freaked out by the banks and also bored of trying to learn anything about art. I foresee a 2011 world that will be a simpler, richer, more Warholian place, although with this one small caveat: you have to be fabulously wealthy already. If you're not, tough luck; it's those toilets in Dalston for you. Form an orderly queue!

GG

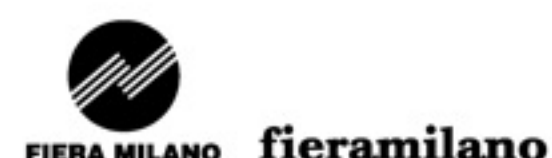
50 years young.



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SaloneUfficio, International Biennial Workspace Exhibition
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